

Kuwait pays \$34 m to citizens

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait began handing out 10 million dinars (\$34 million) Saturday to reward citizens who stayed through seven-months of Iraqi occupation. About 200,000 Kuwaitis and their children born during the occupation are eligible for the 500 dinar (\$1,720) payments. The decision to pay the awards was made by the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah. He fled into exile with most of the other members of the ruling family as Iraq took over the emirate last Aug. 2. About 400,000 other Kuwaitis left during the occupation. Kuwait Radio began announcing an alphabetical list of those entitled to the money, telling them which banks to visit to collect their windfalls. Ahmad Mansour, who stayed on through the invasion, said he was pleased to get the cash. Nasser Al Saleh said he too was delighted to be given 500 dinars but added that democratic reforms would be "the true reward."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة باللغة العربية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

500 refugees leave Kuwait

ABDALY, Kuwait (AP) — More than 500 refugees from Iraq, including one American, were evacuated from northern Kuwait Saturday and put on flights to Egypt. The refugees, mostly Egyptians, were the first group to be evacuated from the Red Crescent refugee camp in this town on the Iraqi border. About 1,100 refugees remain at the camp. The refugees are now mostly bedouin, or stateless people. Officials of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said they had no immediate plans to transfer the Iraqis or bedouins to a third country. "No countries so far have expressed interest in taking these people," an IOM official said. "We can only help them move if they have somewhere to go."

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Tayee' receives King message

NAWAKSHUT (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri Saturday arrived here with a message from His Majesty King Hussein to Mauritania leader Muawieh Weld Sayyed Tayee' in the course of his tour of Arab Maghreb union countries which took him to Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco on similar missions. The minister, who is also to visit Yemen and Sudan has been discussing with the leaders of the Maghreb union Arab League affairs and means of rebuilding solidarity among Arab countries.

Islamist bloc may be formed in Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's largest Islamist movement, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), has indicated it might accept an alliance with other Muslim groups to counter a government campaign against them. Ali Belhadi, the FIS number two, said in a Friday sermon the government and secular opposition parties were trying to wipe out the Islamist movement by picking off the groups one by one. The thrust of the government campaign has been against attempts by Muslim fundamentalists to close down concerts of Andalusian music during Ramadan. "It's the first time the fundamentalists have been challenged so strongly. We had avoided doing it until now," Interior Minister Mohammed Salah Mohammadi said after clashes between police and militants picketing a concert hall.

Six people hanged in Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Six bandits and drug dealers were hanged in Zahedan, capital of Iran's eastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Saturday. The agency said the six were publicly hanged Friday, after being convicted by Zahedan's Islamic revolutionary court. The six were charged with homicide, robbery, drug dealing, terrorism blackmail and other "illegal activities," IRNA said. Iran has hanged more than 2,000 people, most of them on drug-related charges, since December 1988. Iran's draconian laws call for a mandatory death sentence for possession of even small quantities of drugs. Gambling, drinking or selling alcohol and prostitution are all illegal in the Islamic republic, and offenders are often given stiff sentences. But Iranian exile groups maintain the drug-related hangings mask a crack-down on government opponents.

Afghan rebels report fresh attack

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (R) — Afghan rebels said Saturday they had launched a fresh attack on the eastern border town of Khost, taking more government posts and knocking out its new airport. The Pakistan-based rebel government's Media news service said the attack on the garrison began on Friday, the day the Soviet-backed Afghan government accused neighbouring Pakistan of firing artillery in support of the guerrillas. Fighting continued Saturday and airport operations were halted after the terminal was damaged. Media quoted a spokesman for guerrilla commander Jalaluddin Haqqani as saying,

Iran to send 100,000 to Mecca

TEHRAN (R) — Iran said Saturday it would send 110,000 Muslims on a pilgrimage to Mecca in June, ending a three-year boycott of the annual Haj. Tehran Radio quoted an official of the Islamic Guidance Ministry as saying the number had been agreed with Saudi Arabia which restored diplomatic relations with Iran last week. Iran has boycotted the Haj for the past three years in protest against a Saudi ban on political rallies and a quota system reducing the number of pilgrims. Saudi Arabia's relations with Tehran worsened sharply in July 1987 after more than 400 people, mostly Iranians, were killed in clashes with Saudi security forces in Mecca. Relations were broken off nine months later.

Arab League takes cautious bid to end rift

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Arab League launched a low-key effort Saturday to patch up a schism over Iraq's takeover of Kuwait and the outcome of the Gulf war. The meeting lasted only 90 minutes, references to Iraq and its delegate were scrupulously avoided, and all contentious issues put off indefinitely. Only one minister was present — Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid, who played host to the first league session in Cairo for nearly 12 years. The rest were officials. All 21 members sent delegates, but they deliberately avoided any attack on Iraq or its representative, senior Foreign Ministry official Saad Kassem Hamoudi.

Izzeddine says Cairo talks a starting point

AMMAN (J.T.) — Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddine Saturday expressed the view that the Arab League meeting in Cairo would not lead to a deep and genuine process for meaningful discussions, but would be a starting point. "The Arab League should focus the Arab World's attention on the need to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq in the aftermath of the war, and on the means of finding a lasting solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict," Mr. Izzeddine said in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Arabic service. "We should give due consideration to issues of development and to means that can help raise the standard of living in various Arab states," the minister said.

Allies to quit Iraq in days after formal ceasefire

WASHINGTON (AP) — The 100,000-plus allied troops occupying Iraq will begin their withdrawal within "a matter of days" after the United Nations approves a formal ceasefire, U.S. defence officials say. "We want to leave as quickly as possible — it will be a short period of time. It's not going to be kind of prolonged, dragged-out withdrawal once the terms of the ceasefire are in place," said a senior U.S. defence official. While the allies' hold on southeastern Iraq has served as the primary bargaining chip in forcing Iraqi acceptance of the U.N. resolution, U.S. officials believe economic sanctions will prove "the main lever" in forcing compliance.

Baghdad accuses rebels of rampage, murder, looting

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq Saturday accused Kurdish rebels of a rampage of murder and looting during their nine-day occupation of the northern oil city of Kirkuk. A correspondent for the daily Al Jumhuriya wrote that soon after the rebels entered the city on March 19, "residents were rounded up and a search started for Baath Party members in order to execute them." "Burning and looting of houses followed," added the reporter, who said he had been in the city throughout the rebel occupation. "On the first day, Saddam Hospital was occupied by the mobs, who arrested doctors and nurses," the reporter wrote. He said some "escaped two days later to report that the mobs had replaced them with a medical team to treat only the saboteurs." "The patients were neglected and left to suffer in the hospital corridors," he wrote. He said that on March 20, the rebels attacked government

GCC states suspend aid to Jordan, PLO

KUWAIT (Agencies) — The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said Saturday its members were suspending financial aid to Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) because of what the council sees as their support of Iraq in the Gulf crisis. "No forgiveness, no forgetting," GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Beshara, a Kuwaiti, said in announcing the move. He told a news conference the GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — could not continue supporting Amman and the PLO after the two had turned against them. "How can you justify a continuing of aid to a country that turned its back on you. There is no forgiveness for this. It is not a romance where lovers quarrel. The crime is too big to forgive," he said. On the stand taken by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, Mr. Beshara said: "Mr. Arafat took a very reckless course of action and

buildings, killing guards who refused to surrender. "There were tens of bleeding bodies scattered after they were killed by the saboteurs' bullets and executed in the streets." The reporter said the rebels "killed anyone who came close to the bodies to identify them." He accused the rebels of burning government buildings, police stations and schools. "All official and civil documents were burned or destroyed, as well as food and medicine," he wrote. He said the city was recaptured at dawn on Thursday "when the Republican Guard entered Kirkuk and thousands of saboteurs fled."

All Baghdad newspapers reported that the deputy commander in chief of Iraq's armed forces, Lt. Gen. Ibrahim, had toured Kirkuk and sent a telegram to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to report on what he found. Al Jumhuriya said the army had seized documents from the

that the conference has been adjourned to an unspecified date. He said contacts would be made among members to set a date for the conference which will be elevated to foreign minister level and will deal with political issues. Egypt's representative, Mahmoud Abdul-Nasr, told reporters Jordan had proposed that the meeting be adjourned and Egypt seconded the motion. "All the members agreed because the time is not right to discuss political issues," Mr. Abdul Nasr said. Iraq's Hammudi said the spirit at the meeting was "to put what happened behind us and look ahead to better things."

Mr. Abdul Meguid, opening the meeting, only referred to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in elliptical terms. "We are sure that with the importance of studying the Gulf events, we have to grasp the experience and extract the lesson to avoid its repetition," he said. It was the first session to be held in the league's old Cairo headquarters since Egypt was given the official cold shoulder for its 1979 treaty with Israel. Mr. Abdul Meguid called for an Arab reconciliation based on "complete frankness and clarity, for this is the time of frankness not flattery." His call was echoed by Qatari representative Badr Omar Al Dafaa who said of the Gulf crisis: "This bitter experience has brought to us new burdens that

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will have to bear the consequences." The GCC states had long been the PLO's main financial backers and also provided aid to Jordan. Mr. Beshara refused to disclose the amount of aid suspended. But in the past 12 years Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, granted the PLO alone close to \$1 billion.

A Western diplomat said Mr. Beshara left the door open for aid reaching Palestinians living under Israeli occupation by saying that "Palestinians are not a country, they are a people." The diplomat said Mr. Beshara gave "a frank analysis of how the GCC sees the post-Gulf war era... no longer hamstrung by the myth of Arab unity."

Mr. Beshara said finance ministers of the GCC and Syria and Egypt, the two other major Arab contributors to the U.S.-led multinational force which fought Iraq in the Gulf war, would meet in mid-April to discuss future

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King urges 'big five' to address the two dimensions of Mideast conflict

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has called on the U.N. Security Council's five member states to start working immediately to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinian people. In an interview with French television Channel Five the King said: "I believe we have an opportunity to solve the problem, and I believe that the principles that have been upheld in this world also apply to the Palestinian problem — the Arab-Israeli problem — as rapidly as possible. How this works I do not know. I am not aware of any particular plan, but I believe we need very active and quiet diplomacy to prepare the ground for a final resolution on the Palestinian-Israeli problem and we need an Arab-Israeli peace."

"We need to have the Israelis and Palestinians talking and the Palestinians committing them-

selves to what they accept, in terms of their rights and of their homeland and in terms of relations between Jordan and Palestine." On U.S. contribution to solving the problem, the King said: "The question we have been asked if the Arabs accept Israel's right to exist, on that we said time and again that this happened. The moment we accepted U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The question is what the shape of Israel on the ground and particularly in terms of Palestinian rights and Palestinian soil." "President Bush is obviously more capable of realising the problems within the region. He has been to the area and has been active in foreign policy for a long time. I think the opportunity is there and we must work for it. Peace is for the benefit of the entire region. It is important in applying the principles equally on problems of similar nature."

The King said in reply to

another question: "The Palestinian aspect has to be dealt with by the Palestinians themselves but we will facilitate this process to them if we are asked to do so." "We should begin to work with the big five and some of the representatives to try to establish a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue and to educate all concerned in what peace really means for everybody to understand of all the sides concerned. So these are two parallel lines which should eventually meet in an international conference... to see Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 implemented with Security Council guarantees and blessings: that is the way."

"Peace would be the greatest achievement in my life and Jordan will be committed to that objective," he said. On the Gulf issue he said: "It is strange that to hear repeatedly that Jordan supported Iraq and its leadership in this crisis. We were for peace, we were for

the reversal of the action of the second of August, I mean the invasion and occupation of Kuwait, by peaceful means. We were against war. We were for peaceful solution and we have always been against occupation of territory by force or the annexation anywhere in the world."

Asked on prospects of change of leadership in Iraq, he said: "I do not like to discuss such issues as this is something for the people of Iraq."

Scowcroft's secret trip

President George Bush's national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, spent two days in the Middle East this week, the White House said Saturday, on a trip that was not announced at the time. The White House declined to provide details of the trip.

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Iraqi envoy assails Arabs

CAIRO (R) — Iraq's envoy to the first Arab League session in Cairo in 12 years Saturday lashed out at fellow Arab countries afterwards accusing them of not helping Baghdad repel foreign occupiers. Saad Kassem Al Hammoudi, speaking after a low-key league meeting aimed at patching up a split over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, also accused an unnamed neighbour and Israel of involvement in a Shiite Muslim and Kurdish rebellion in Iraq.

"There is now a foreign occupation in Iraq," he told reporters, referring to the presence of U.S. and other Western troops in about 15 per cent of southern Iraq. "Where are the Arab countries in implementing the Arab defence pact?" Mr. Hammoudi, head of the Arab desk at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, told reporters. Mr. Hammoudi said he participated in the Cairo meeting because Iraq was a full member in the league and was merely practicing its rights. Delegates said he did not speak one word throughout the open and closed sessions. Seated five seats away from Kuwait's delegate, he took notes while cameras clicked away.

The 1950 joint defence pact prohibits the use of force by member states against one another. If one state invades the other, the league council can decide on military action to force it out. "The Arab Defence Pact was not implemented except in one condition," Mr. Hammoudi said, referring to Egypt and Syria which sent thousands of troops to Saudi Arabia to help fight Iraq. "We have neglected the pact in a lot of other cases... why should it be implemented in only one case? Why differentiate between Iraq and another country?" he asked.

A league summit a week after Iraq's Aug. 2 seizure of Kuwait agreed to send Arab troops to the Gulf but by then U.S. troops were already heading for Saudi Arabia.

"We prefer adhering to the Arab League Charter and the defence pact provided it is not used as a cover such as recalling foreign troops to show their strength against Arabs," Mr. Hammoudi said.

Mr. Hammoudi told Egypt's national news agency MENA Iraq did not agree with a Gulf war ceasefire resolution being prepared in the U.N. Security Council because it "prejudices its rights."

He said Iraq would agree to destroy its weapons of mass des-

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Prince Hassan visits south, urges indigenous solutions

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday toured the governorates of Karak, Maan and Tafila in addition to other areas in the south of the country, adversely affected by the recent rains and floods that brought about widespread devastation. Prince Hassan called for stepping up cooperation between the governorates of Karak, Maan and Tafila and stressed that such cooperation became a necessity in the aftermath of the devastation brought about by the rains. The Regent affirmed that cooperation between the Jordanian people and institutions is the real guarantee and the ideal solution to any crisis the Kingdom faces.

Prince Hassan started his tour by a visit to Wadi Musa, 22

kilometres west of Maan. The Prince had a first hand review of the extent of the damages and efforts being exerted by the authorities to restore normal life. At Gharandal, in Tafila governorate, the Regent was briefed by the mayor of the town on the damages caused by rains and on efforts to bring normal life again to the town. Prince Hassan then visited Karak governorate where he inspected the extent of damage to public and private property, particularly to the agricultural sector in the regions of Ghor Al Haditha, Ghor Al Mazra'a and Ghor Al Safi.

He also visited Al Safi dam site, which is currently under construction, to inspect the damages caused there as well. At the site of the dam, Prince

Hassan said in an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the Jordanian people enjoyed high morale, despite the difficulties through which they are passing as a result of consecutive crisis.

This year's rains, Prince Hassan said, will yield a good agricultural season and will help replenish the Kingdom's water reserves.

He said statistics conducted by the concerned authorities have helped in identifying and assessing damages, which facilitated the process of finding suitable solutions and helped in defining the assistance needed by people affected by the floods.

The Crown Prince concluded his tour in Karak by visiting Al Taybeh town, which sustained heavy damages.

Subdued rallies mark Land Day amid tight Israeli security

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Thousands of Israeli Arabs staged peaceful rallies amid heavy police presence and Palestinians observed a general strike in the occupied territories Saturday in an annual "Land Day" protest. But for the first time in years, the traditional strike was called off in Israel, exposing sharp political differences among the country's 800,000 Arabs. The main rally was in Sakhrin, an Arab town in the Galilee. Police and participants said some 250 police officers and an armoured personnel carrier watched over 5,000 to 6,000 demonstrators who left quietly after a short assembly. In the Galilee town of Umm Al

Fahom, dozens of helmeted riot police officers in full gear stood guard on a hilltop as some 200 Communists with red arm bands marched below, singing: "With blood and fire we shall liberate Palestine." Police said six Arabs were detained in northern Israel Saturday for national activities, and Arab reports said another eight activists were detained Friday night as a preventive measure. In the southern desert bedouin villages, a small Communist rally concluded Land Day events. "The gatherings were the smallest I've ever seen and police were in their highest numbers. The Arabs were divided, and police came to show force," said an experienced Arab journalist

who has covered many Land Day protests.

The 1.7 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip were barred from entering Israel, at least until Sunday. The army kept the entire Gaza under curfew, confining some 750,000 Palestinians to their homes as of Friday. A spokesman reported some traffic closures in the West Bank, including the towns of Ramallah and Tul-karem.

Saturday's strike, which shut commerce and transport, was called by the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement. Many demonstrators burned tyres and displayed Palestinian

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Yeltsin under hardliners fire

MOSCOW (AP) — Hardliners renewed their attacks Saturday on Boris Yeltsin, accusing the Russian leader of installing a "new dictatorship" and evading responsibility for the republic's economic and social crisis. The criticism came in a report read by Vladimir Isakov, a deputy who broke ranks with Mr. Yeltsin in February, on the third day of a special session of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies.

The session had been sought by Mr. Yeltsin's opponents in a bid to win a motion of no confidence in the Russian leader. The hardliners issued their report a day after Mr. Yeltsin had outlined his plan for solving Russia's problems.

Mr. Yeltsin called for a rapid transition to a market economy, cutting the budget, strong legal guarantees of human rights and removal of Communist Party organisations from the military, KGB and criminal justice system. He said all political parties should

meet to agree on a unified reform plan. Earlier in Saturday's session, striking coal miners threatened to continue and widen their month-long strike. In a telegram read to the assembly, the miners blamed the parliament for not meeting their demands, which include the resignation of Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

Mr. Isakov, who had supported demands for a no-confidence vote in Mr. Yeltsin, balanced his sharp criticism of the Russian leader with a suggestion that President Gorbachev resign.

"I am not a supporter of the language of ultimatums, but perhaps Mikhail Gorbachev should really think about transferring the wheel into someone else's hands," said Mr. Isakov, the 41-year-old chairman of one of the Russian legislature's two chambers. He suggested that Mr. Gorbachev, winner of the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize, take a diplomatic job.

The comments by Mr. Isakov,

who like Mr. Yeltsin quit the Communist Party last year, showed how the movement to dump Mr. Gorbachev is growing. Tens of thousands of people flooded Moscow streets Thursday in defiance of a ban on protests to demand that Mr. Gorbachev step down after six years as Soviet leader.

Mr. Yeltsin and other radical non-communist reformers are spearheading the drive to remove Mr. Gorbachev, but Mr. Isakov's speech indicated that even some of Mr. Yeltsin's detractors want Mr. Gorbachev out.

In his 20-minute speech to the 1,000-member Russian Parliament, Mr. Isakov did not explicitly renew the proposal for a no-confidence motion in Mr. Yeltsin, but harshly criticised the Russian leader.

"A new dictatorship is in the way to speak of it is to commit a crime against the people and one's own conscience," Mr. Isakov said.

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Institute offers 'framework' for Middle East peace process

By Norma Holmes
United States Information Agency

WASHINGTON — The Arab American Institute (AAI) has proposed a "framework" for a Middle East peace settlement, which is said to have been derived from principles for a comprehensive peace settlement set forth by President Bush in his March 6 address to Congress.

The proposal, contained in an AAI working paper, was revealed March 27 by Hisham Sharabi, the chairman of the Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine (CPAP), during a March 27 CPAP-sponsored symposium "The Palestinians After the Gulf War: The Critical Questions."

Arab American Institute Director James Zogby, in a United States Information Agency (USIA) interview March 28, said the AAI working paper, "The Strategic Peace Initiative Package: A New Approach," was submitted for consideration to the U.S. and Arab governments some three months ago.

Mr. Sharabi said that the "resolution of the Palestinian problem is the key to stability and peace in the Middle East." He said President Bush's planned trip to the Middle East "attests to the administration's seriousness in addressing the central problem of the region."

The AAI proposal, Sharabi said, calls for an exchange of territory for peace, international guarantees for both Palestinian and Israeli security and recognition of their national rights.

The proposed framework calls for a series of bilateral steps leading to Palestinian-Israeli negotiations to determine final status issues; international security guarantees for both Israelis and Palestinians; political independence for Palestinians, and Arab states' recognition of Israel.

Mr. Sharabi said the plan also calls for a "commitment up front" by the United States, the Arab states and the U.N. Security Council to Israel's withdrawal from the occupied West Bank and Gaza, to be followed by international security guarantees, economic and defence assistance, and funds for economic development for Israel.

— Arab states acceptance of Israel's permanence and legitimacy as a state in the Middle East, following Israel's acceptance of withdrawal.

— U.N. Security force oversight over the election of a Palestinian national assembly, which would constitute the Palestinian interim government.

Under the proposal, the status of Jewish settlements and final borders would remain unchanged until resolved in final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the government of Israel.

Within six months, the Arab states would end their economic embargo of Israel, and at the end of one year, they would enter into negotiations with the government of Israel on regional issues, including water resources and arms control.

Under the proposal, at the end of three years, the U.N. Security Council would convene an all-party conference to resolve "final status questions" through a series of direct bilateral negotiations between the Palestinian government and Israel, Syria and Israel, Lebanon and Israel, and Jordan and Israel.

Upon completion of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, Arab states would agree to offer Israel formal diplomatic recognition, according to the proposal.

Simultaneously, the conference would give formal recognition to the state of Palestine and admit it as a member of the United Nations.

"Anything else would fail the twin tests of fairness and security," which President Bush has set forth, Mr. Sharabi said.

Mr. Sharabi was one of a panel of internationally known journalists and scholars participating in the symposium. Other panelists were Samir Farsoun, chairman of the Department of Sociology at the American University and editor of "Arab Studies Quarterly," Mohammad Hallaj, director of the Palestine Research and Education Center and editor of "Palestine Perspectives" magazine; Rami Khouri, a Palestinian-Jordanian journalist based in Amman; and Hanan Ashrawi, professor of English at Bir Zeit University on the West Bank.

Ms. Ashrawi, one of nine Palestinian women who were part of the State Department's recent trip to the Middle East, said she was "impressed by the U.S. commitment to peace."

Warning," replaces the previous travel advisory, dated Feb. 3 1991, which noted that "the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf region had increased tensions in the area and resulted in a heightened risk to Americans."

The Feb. statement advised all private U.S. citizens to defer all travel to Jordan and ordered all non-essential personnel and dependents to leave the country. It also said: "Embassy operations are sharply curtailed and normal consular operations suspended."

The State Department issued other advisory notes to Americans visiting Yemen, under the title "Yemen — Caution." A U.S. embassy official said it was to be taken that Yemen was a less risky place than Jordan to travel to for the time being.

The statement, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan Times under the heading of "Jordan —

East, said genuine peace in the region requires "one crucial element: Palestinian national rights and Palestinian right to self-determination are issues that have to be addressed, have to be implemented."

She said the government of Israel continues to be paralysed by a lack of political consensus. "Israeli political reality is so fragmented. No real majority for any political position exists. There is no single majority in any of the political proposals."

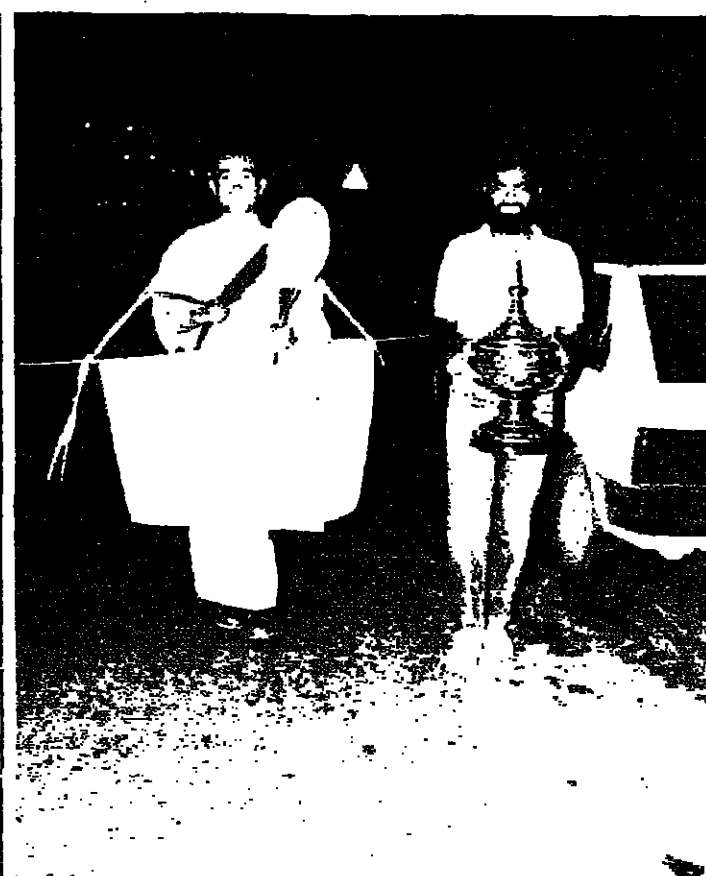
Recent polls, she said, show that 49 per cent of Israelis favour the principle of land-for-peace, while another 49 per cent oppose it. "Left to its own devices, Israel is not capable of moving. Israel has to be made to understand that it must comply with the will of the international community," she stressed.

Mr. Hallaj said U.S. policy upholds the principle that Palestinians have legitimate political rights, and the United States does not accept Israel's claims of sovereignty over the Arab territories it occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. He pointed out, however, that "statements of policy are continually contradicted by operational policy, with the result that neither Israel nor the Arabs have much cause to take U.S. policy seriously."

"Working for peace in the Middle East not require reinventing the wheel, only making sure that the carriage is not derailed," Mr. Hallaj stressed. "Israel must not be permitted to veto peace in the Middle East. The U.S. does no one itself and Israel included — a favour by encouraging Israel's delusions that it can veto peace in the Middle East forever."

Mr. Rami Khouri stressed the need to recognise the right of Palestinians to choose their own leadership, and that the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) is their representative.

"Do I, as a Palestinian, have the same rights as Shimon Peres?" Mr. Khouri asked. "By any standard of international law, political morality or human decency," he said, Palestinians have those rights. "But until the parties all agree on that, there is not going to be an end to the peace process."



Japanese Buddhist on peace mission heads for Jerusalem

By Caroline Faraj
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Junsei Terasawa, a Japanese Buddhist who Friday set off on a peace mission from Amman to Jerusalem, is Sunday joining a Gulf peace team camp for a walk from Jericho to the holy city.

"Sunday, March 31, is Easter Sunday in the calendar, and this is the day the peace group and I have chosen to draw attention to the plight of this region and the injustice done to it as a result of launching the Gulf war on Iraq," Terasawa said in a statement to the Jordan Times at the start of his walk towards the King Hussein bridge across the River Jordan.

"I have prayed for peace to be restored to the region, and called for the Palestinians to regain their homeland, and for an end to bloodshed," said Terasawa.

"The peace group who I am joining in Jericho on Sunday chose Easter Sunday for the peace walk as the day symbolises peace and since it is the first western feast celebrated after the Gulf war," the peace activist said.

"Walks like these and the pre-

sent opportune climate should prompt the world community to work seriously for peace, not only in the Gulf, but also in Palestine where the Palestinians need their rights, and for justice in other parts of the world."

"Indeed, the Gulf crisis has been proved to be linked to the Palestine question, and as peace activists, we feel that it is our duty to direct the world community's attention to the need for peace in Palestine," Terasawa said.

Terasawa said that while in Baghdad, between Dec. 1 and 7, he staged a sit-in in front of the American embassy and the monument of the unknown soldier in Baghdad, and prayed for peace. Later, he said, he joined the Gulf peace group and remained with the group members near the border with Saudi Arabia.

Following the Gulf war, Terasawa said, he participated in a campaign, along with 14 other Japanese citizens, to raise donations and collect in-kind contributions, like medicines and children's milk, which were sent to Iraq through the Iraqi National Red Crescent Society.

Four die in police, smugglers shootout

AMMAN (J.T.) — Two police officers and two smugglers were killed early Saturday in an exchange of fire near the Iraqi border, east of the border post of Ruweished, during an attempt by smugglers to infiltrate into Jordanian territory.

A statement by the Public Security Department (PSD) said that the incident occurred at four in the morning while a badia and border police patrol unit was on duty along the common border with Iraq.

A group of smugglers who were spotted trying to infiltrate into Jordan from Iraq exchanged fire with the patrol unit resulting in the death of the unit's commander Major Atallah Al Jazi, from Husseinieh near Zarqa, and police officer Hayel Awwad, who were trying to infiltrate into Jordanian territory from Syria.

The infiltrators were spotted by Jordanian security forces. They ordered the smugglers to stop,

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted the spokesman as saying that three of the patrol unit, who were not identified, were rushed by helicopter to Al Hussein Medical City for treatment.

Contacted by the Jordan Times, the hospital declined to give any information about the condition of the unit members wounded in the exchange.

According to Petra, several smugglers were captured during the exchange of fire which occurred at Al Maizaliyah, described as a desert town known as a centre for smuggling arms and drugs in and out of Jordan.

The incident was the first of its kind reported by the PSD since July last year when an army patrol shot dead four armed men who were trying to infiltrate into Jordanian territory from Syria.

The infiltrators were spotted by Jordanian security forces. They ordered the smugglers to stop,

but when they failed to obey the security forces opened fire killing them instantly.

Over the past four years the PSD acquired several specially equipped helicopters to help monitor border regions and help curtail drug smuggling operations, and stricter measures are continually being introduced to foil drug-trafficking operations.

The PSD spokesman did not disclose the nature of the merchandise the smugglers were trying to bring into the country, but PSD officials said that the past years witnessed an increase in the number of drug trafficking cases across Jordan's borders with its three Arab neighbours.

The director of the PSD's Anti-Narcotics Bureau in Zarqa said that Jordan is neither a drug producer nor a drug consumer country, but its territory is being used by drug traffickers and smugglers heading towards other destinations.

Parley issues recommendations on voluntary, charitable activities

AMMAN (J.T.) — A round-table conference, which ended in Amman last week, Saturday released a set of recommendations aimed at promoting the work of voluntary organisations within the Jordanian community.

A total of 70 participants, representing various private and public organisations involved in charitable and voluntary activities in Jordan, took part in the three-day round-table conference which was chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QJWF).

A statement summing up the recommendations said that the participants had called for the introduction of a well-planned training programme for those involved in voluntary work, and urged the government to give support for such programme by providing the required facilities and equipment.

The participants urged the government to help carry out voluntary services aimed at raising the standard of living in the rural

regions, and to help implement medium and small-size enterprises for the rural communities.

The recommendations called on the government to help conduct a comprehensive survey of all the traditional crafts in Jordan for the sake of identifying their types and seize and pave the ground for an integrated plan for their development and marketing of the products.

According to the statement, the participants urged QJWF to offer its various centres in Jordan as a training ground for members of voluntary and charitable organisations.

The statement said that the conference was held in the course of implementing a U.N.-sponsored and financed project designed to promote the work of voluntary services in the Kingdom.

A total of five working papers were reviewed at the meeting which were attended by representatives of the ministry of planning and social development along with various organisations, including the General Union of

Voluntary Societies (GUVS), the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), QAF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is sponsoring the project.

A study submitted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the low standard of living in Jordan was reviewed by the participants, the statement added.

Princess Basma, who opened the meetings Tuesday, voiced appreciation to UNDP for its support of the country's voluntary sector. The Princess also thanked UNICEF for the social survey it had conducted, focusing attention on those living below the poverty line as a direct result of the Gulf crisis.

UNDP Resident Representative Ali Attiga told the meeting that the project for the voluntary sector was "immensely important as it deals directly with the most pressing problems in the country, under the present difficult circumstances, and with the rising levels of poverty and unemployment."

U.S. decrees Americans can again travel to Jordan, but with caution

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United States seems to have relaxed restrictions imposed on American citizens travelling to Jordan and, according to diplomatic sources here, U.S. embassy staff and dependents are on their way back to Amman.

According to a U.S. embassy statement, the State Department in Washington has issued an advisory note to all U.S. citizens concerning travel to the Kingdom noting that the improved climate has permitted the return to the Jordanian capital of non-essential U.S. government personnel and dependents.

"In the coming week, some of the U.S. embassy staff and their dependents will be returning to Amman," said an official who declined to give details.

Sources here said that by June

all of the U.S. embassy staff, together with their dependents, will have returned to Jordan.

However, the statement said that "the situation remains fluid and can change without notice."

"U.S. citizens who travel to Jordan are therefore advised to exercise caution and are encouraged to contact the embassy to register their presence and receive an update on the current situation," the statement said.

The statement, issued on March 29, said: "The State Department advises U.S. citizens considering travel to Jordan that, although diminished, the potential for incidents of violence against U.S. citizens or property still exists."

The statement, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan Times under the heading of "Jordan —

Warning," replaces the previous travel advisory, dated Feb. 3 1991, which noted that "the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf region had increased tensions in the area and resulted in a heightened risk to Americans."

The Feb. statement advised all private U.S. citizens to defer all travel to Jordan and ordered all non-essential personnel and dependents to leave the country. It also said: "Embassy operations are sharply curtailed and normal consular operations suspended."

The State Department issued other advisory notes to Americans visiting Yemen, under the title "Yemen — Caution." A U.S. embassy official said it was to be taken that Yemen was a less risky place than Jordan to travel to for the time being.

Water distribution programme in vigour

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has no plans for scrapping the present water distribution programme for the coming summer, but will make sure that water distribution will be fair to all regions of the Kingdom, according to Minister of Water and Irrigation Saad Hayel Serour.

The ministry usually applies the water distribution programme during the dry season, but since last summer, a two-day-a-week water supply programme has been in force. The programme will be announced in the local press in the coming few days, the minister said in a statement to Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times.

Referring to the amount of water collected in dam reservoirs over the past winter season, the minister said that King Talal dam, which has a total capacity of 80 million cubic metres of water, has collected 27 million, while the other three main dams: Shueib, Kafrein and Sharhabil together 5.5 million cubic metres. "These amounts are obviously insufficient to meet all the needs of the agricultural sector," the minister commented.

The minister said that several dams would be built in the coming years to collect flood water for irrigation purposes in the dry season.

Referring to the recent rains, he said that even though the water was a blessing for Jordan, the storm caused severe damages to the agricultural projects, mainly those at Bani Hammad, Al Hassa and Khanzi, in southern Jordan. Ministry of Water and Irrigation teams are now at work, along with other departments, to restore normal life to the farmers and rural communities.

Due to lack of sufficient water resources, the minister said, it has been decided to prevent any expansion of agricultural activity in the Jordan Valley. He said that farmers are now being encouraged to grow cereals more than any other crops in the Jordan Valley and other areas due to the heavy demand on this commodity.

Churches send aid to Iraq through MECC

AMMAN (J.T.) — Churches in Germany, Sweden and Denmark have collected food and medical supplies which were Saturday dispatched to Iraq through the Amman-based Regional Office of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), according to a council statement here.

The statement was issued by Fuad Farraj, head of a committee set up by MECC to take charge of the process of sending relief supplies to Iraq to help the victims of the Gulf war.

A total of eight trucks laden with 22 tonnes of children milk

and 11 tonnes of various food supplies, along with two trucks carrying mineral water and 105 tonnes of food and medical supplies, were sent in a convoy from Amman to Baghdad early Saturday, Mr. Farraj said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

"The MECC, which has been providing continuous help to the Iraqi people, in cooperation with various churches and religious groups around the world, is also extending a helping hand to returnees from Kuwait and Iraq,"

Mr. Farraj said. He said that to date, the MECC had provided JD 200,000 in cash to Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates, most of whom returned penniless from the Gulf zone.

According to Mr. Farraj, the MECC is now turning its attention to an integrated project to help the expatriates become self-supporting. He said that such a project is to be carried out in cooperation with the concerned government departments in Jordan.

The league was moved to Tunis in 1979 in protest at Egypt's treaty with Israel.

But Arab foreign ministers agreed last year to return its headquarters to Cairo and the cream exterior and decorative Islamic tiles of the headquarters building there have since been given a facelift.

Arabs

(Continued from page 1)

will be difficult to tackle without being honest with oneself and frank with each other."

Kuwait's ambassador to the league, Abdul Mohsen Al Ge'ani, who took over from the Qatari as chairman of the Arab League Council for the next six months, urged a new Arab sys-

tem based on mutual trust and called for changes in the league charter.

But Mr. Abdul Meguid said the Arabs should look for a better future in which security should be based on a 1950 joint defence pact and the principle of settling conflicts peacefully.

Speakers also stressed the need to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict and satisfy Palestinian demands for a homeland.


Mr. Abdul Meguid said an in-

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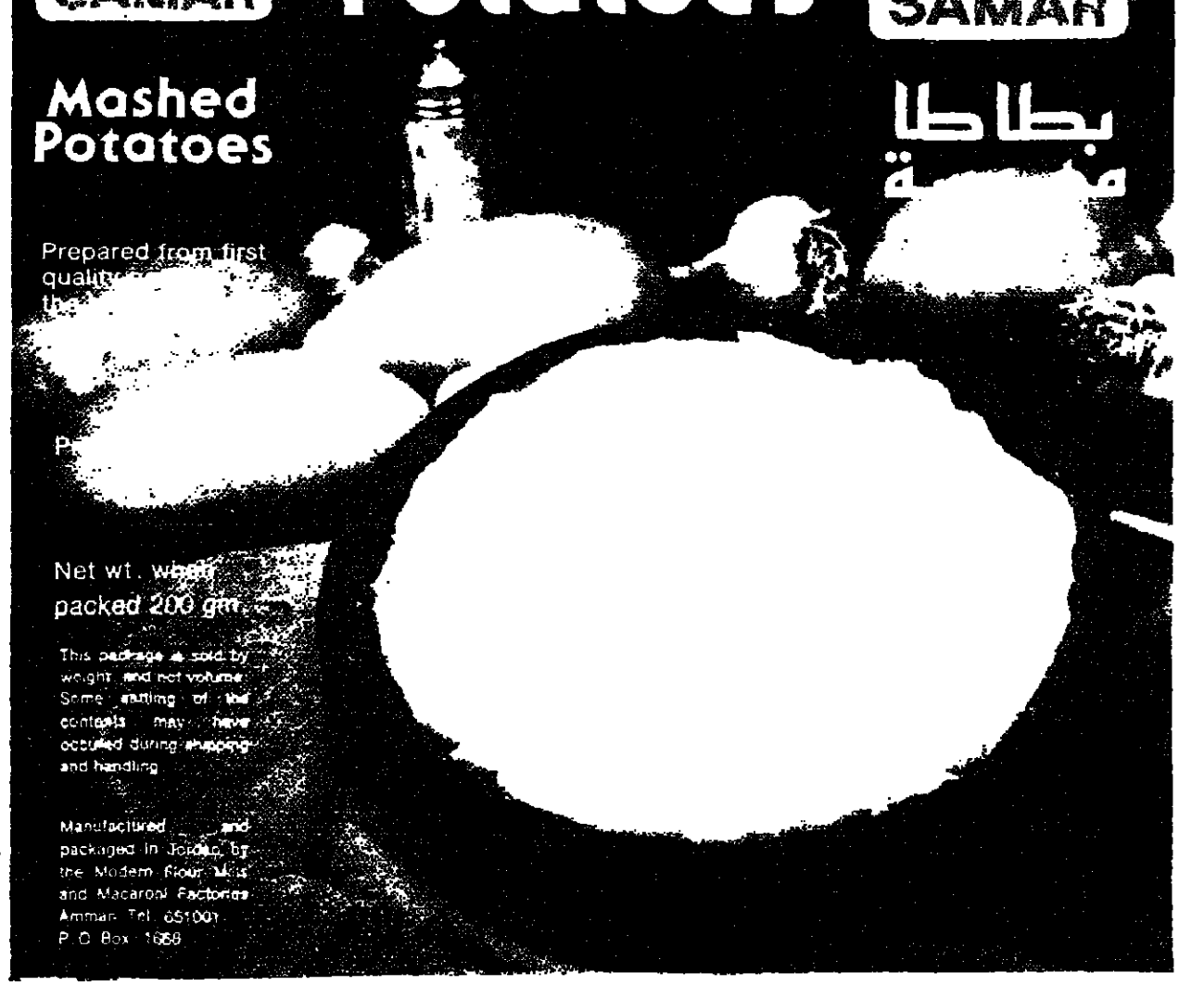
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15th Land Day

TODAY marks the 15th anniversary of the martyrdom of six Arabs who were killed by Israeli troops while protesting the confiscation of their land in Galilee in 1976. March 30 has since become Land Day, the symbol of Palestinian struggle to keep their homes and land in Palestine and the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

At a time when almost every shade of Israeli public opinion campaigns and strives to bring more Jews into Palestine, Palestinians are at one in resisting Israeli schemes and designs which are aimed at evicting them from their ancestral homeland.

While Israeli officials contend that Palestinian Arabs inside the Green Line have recently moved to show a greater willingness to integrate into the Israeli community as a whole in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, Palestinian leaders maintain that their people still suffer from the same problems that led them to revolt on that day, March 30, of 1976. In Friday's Jerusalem Post newspaper, those leaders were quoted as saying that continued harsh treatment by the Israeli government had relegated them to the role of second class citizens. Arab councils within the Green Line continue to receive budgets that are, in some cases, only a quarter of the size allocated to similar sized Jewish local authorities. Similarly, the bitter old dispute over land ownership has not abated, as Israel was still taking their land either directly or by placing it under the jurisdiction of Jewish regional councils.

But it is not inside Israel proper that the Arabs feel outrage at being dispossessed of land and rights that had been in their families for generations. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza continue to be subjected to collective punishment and a brutal occupation and all forms of political oppression and economic deprivation.

It is not difficult to see the connection between more Jewish immigration into Palestine and Palestinian emigration or expulsion and deportation from their homeland. What is more difficult to see and understand, however, is the way the Israelis have come to understand their state and its mission. Some of them, on the one hand, detect the morass of anti-Palestinian chauvinism into which Israel has been sinking but want their people and government to struggle out of it in order to encourage more Jews to immigrate. While on the other hand, there are the other, all-too-well-known groups who would actually boast of naked chauvinism if it only led to expelling all Palestinians from their homes and land.

It should not take too much imagination to see the contrast, but what is really important is for the Palestinians themselves to continue to remember that they are the object here. Only their steadfastness can foil the enemy design and prevent Israel from gobbling up the rest of the land.

Steadfast Palestinians deserve from us not only sympathy and encouragement and verbal support. It is the duty of every Arab and peace-loving nations in the world to help this people, in deeds rather than words, to free itself from the yoke of occupation and to attain its legitimate national rights that have been denied for so long.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday gave due prominence to His Majesty King Hussein's visit to France and his talks with President Mitterrand over the Gulf issue and the Middle East question with particular stress to the King's statement in which he described the talks as most successful to date. The King has urged France to seize the opportune climate and act immediately to find a lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem, and emphasised the French role in the peace-making process, the paper noted. The King's talks with the French president represent only one more link in Jordan's continued endeavour to see the international legitimacy implemented and Security Council resolutions on Palestine carried out, the paper added. Indeed, the present opportunity should be seized; and the French role should be stimulated so that the Palestinian people can regain their right and the Middle East once again enjoy peace and stability. It has to be said that the Israelis are striving now to waste the present chance of making peace in the area by offering impractical ideas and plans designed only to stall the implementation of the Security Council resolutions, the paper warned. The only guarantee to ensure the aspired peace, the paper said, is through the implementation of U.N. resolutions with firmness, and the application of the international legitimacy with regard to the Middle East question. The paper said that Jordan which has been striving to establish peace based on justice, remains an essential party to the peace-making process.

A columnist in Al Doustour daily voices strong criticism of the Arab League which is meeting March 30 in Cairo to discuss Arab affairs, because he says, the agenda is void of essential topics related to the Gulf question. Taber Al Udwan says that the agenda ought to have included the consequences of the aggression on Iraq, and the U.S.-sponsored draft resolution to be submitted to the Security Council shortly. The writer says that the Arab League has so far failed to send a team to Iraq in order to report on the disaster that befell that country, and has done nothing vis-a-vis the U.S. draft resolution which is humiliating not only to Iraq but rather to the whole Arab World. Should the United States succeed in imposing its humiliating conditions on Iraq, the Arab League can by no means succeed in healing the rifts in the Arab World, and if anything, this Arab League could be transformed into a tool in the hands of Washington, exactly the same as the Organisation of American States (OAS), making the United States a policeman guarding American interests in this region, the writer warns. He says that the Arab League charter is no more eligible to help Arab states deal with problems plaguing the Arab World, and its various institutions require a lot of arduous work if the Arab countries are really determined to launch joint Arab action that would safeguard the nation's interest.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Time to write off Jordan debts

IT IS common knowledge that Jordan is burdened by a heavy external debt of \$8.2 billion, an amount considered reasonable in absolute terms, but extremely high relative to the small size of the Jordanian economy. The foreign debt is equals 220 per cent of the gross national product (GNP). To appreciate how this ratio is, one has to recall that the indebtedness of major debtor countries in Latin America, considered debt-ridden like Brazil and Argentina is below 80 and 100 per cent of their respective GNP's. In other words the relative burden of foreign indebtedness on the Jordanian economy is almost equal to 2.4 times the burden of the heaviest debtor countries in the world. In relative terms Jordan is at the top of the list of debtor countries.

Re-scheduling aside, installments covering principal and interest payable annually to service the big debts cost around 17.5 per cent of the gross debts, equal to 38 per cent of the country's GNP, or 75 per cent of the central government's annual budget. These extremely high ratios are not stated to scare the reader. It is too late to do that. They are mentioned to indicate to readers

and the creditors especially, that servicing this huge debt is physically impossible. The mere postponement or re-scheduling of some or all installments will result in building up the debt and making its repayment even more impossible.

Lending banks understand the above facts. Therefore, they trade Jordanian commitments in the foreign debt secondary market at 22 cent to the dollar. They have effectively given up 78 per cent of Jordan's debt, and covered this portion in their books by adequate reserves.

However, more than half of Jordan's indebtedness belongs to governments not banks. Governments are of course more able to write off old debts than banks. If banks were ready to write off 78 per cent of Jordan's debts, governments should be more generous in doing so.

International market forces have determined that Jordan's capacity to service debts is limited to 22 per cent of the actual size of its indebtedness. When creditors forgive 78 per cent of their debts to Jordan, they will have reasons to believe that the Jordanian economy will be able to repay the balance, while if they

insist on 100 per cent of the contracted amounts they may not end up with any extra dollar beyond the capacity of the country to generate surpluses of foreign exchange.

The door has been lately wide open for debt relief. Lending countries such as the U.S., France, Japan and Germany started the process of forgiving debtor countries such as Egypt, Poland, sub-Saharan and other countries from part or all of their debts, especially military debts. Therefore, it is time for the government of Jordan to apply formally to the Paris Club which, includes lending governments, and later on to London Club, which includes lending banks and corporations, to relieve Jordan from 78 per cent of its debt, provided Jordan will take all practical steps to pay the remainder plus interest at the rate of \$350 million a year, which is the maximum that Jordan can repay under the best of circumstances.

Such application is financially and politically justified, especially in the current circumstances. That is much better than taking the position of wait and see.

What country is next for 'new world slaughter'?

By Stephen Slade

The following article is reprinted from the New York-based The Guardian, a radical independent newsweekly.

It was not a war, it was a slaughter. You have to go back to the great colonial wars when European technology decimated Third World countries to find a parallel.

And it was certainly no Vietnam. In Vietnam the United States dropped more bombs than during all of World War II. It took a decade and cost \$8,000 U.S. and 2.5 million Vietnamese lives. In the Gulf the United States waged the largest bombing campaign in history — it took only six weeks and cost fewer than 200 U.S. lives. Over 200,000 Iraqis were killed. The Vietnam "kill ratio" was 50 to 1. In the Gulf it was 1,000 to 1.

Just days after the fighting stopped, a euphoric President Bush declared: "By God, we've kicked this Vietnam Syndrome." The very name suggested that opposition to U.S. wars in the Third World was a sickness. The president sees it as an addiction we have kicked cold turkey. A measure of the power of Vietnam was shown in prewar polls. In October, 90 per cent opposed the United States starting a war. By March, 90 per cent were cheering the slaughter.

For 20 years the "Vietnam Syndrome" was a brake on war. President Ronald Reagan pursued the largest military buildup in peacetime history, but he limited the use of that military to small campaigns: bombing Libya, invading Grenada, guarding Kuwait tankers in the Gulf, funding low intensity proxy wars in Central America. Bit by bit he chipped away at the public's opposition to war.

Bush upped the ante shortly after becoming president. He invaded Panama, staging the largest U.S. military attack since Vietnam. Since then he has deployed U.S. fighter planes over the Philippines (to "send a signal of support" for the coup-threatened Aquino government). When U.S. advisers were trapped in a San Salvador hotel, he rushed in a U.S. commando team. U.S. troops were dispatched

to rescue U.S. citizens in Liberia and Somalia.

In two years Bush has sent U.S. troops into combat situations in the third World six times. And now he is thrilled to have kicked the Vietnam Syndrome that held the U.S. back for 20 years.

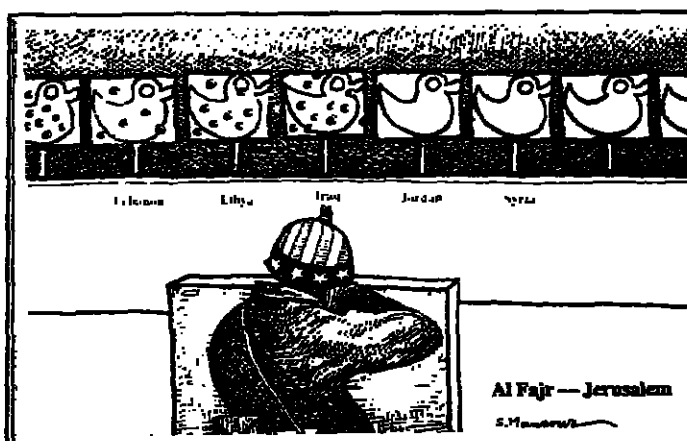
Who will be next? There is a long list of possibilities. The blood wasn't dry on the battlefields of the Gulf region when Bush met with Colombia's president to discuss the drug war. A year ago the United States planned to station an aircraft carrier battle group off the Colombian coast. In neighbouring Peru U.S. Marines led combat patrols against Shining Path guerrillas active in the coca-growing mountains. Already there is a military-like Drug Enforcement Administration force there, complete with helicopter gunships and jungle bases. In the Philippines, negotiations are dragging on over the massive U.S. bases, and a growing guerrilla movement has already killed a half-dozen U.S. soldiers.

As the fighting wound down in the Gulf, five more U.S. military advisers died in El Salvador when their helicopter crashed. In early March the rebels launched the latest in an ongoing series of increasingly effective attacks. Is the army the U.S. has built there over the last 10 years on the verge of collapse? What would Washington do if it were? And then there is Cuba — the "last communist country." Already the Cuban-American community is saying, "Castro is next."

And, of course, there will always be the Middle East. "High-ranking officials" have been saying for months that the U.S. would keep a large force permanently in the Gulf. Given the demonstrated power of relentless bombing, that force will likely consist mostly of naval and air units — and a vast quantity of supplies to make future deployments even faster.

The U.S. military went to war with 60 days worth of ammunition — much of it will probably never leave the Gulf.

Who will it be used against? Iran? Syria, which invaded Lebanon as surely as Iraq invaded Kuwait — and which has, also



"We seriously underestimated the military's ability to kill off tens of thousands of Iraqis with 'miraculously light' U.S. casualties. Our focus on body bags that never came home inevitably diminished the importance of Iraqi lives."

long cherished the role of regional leader — used its \$1 billion "payment" from Saudi Arabia for joining the anti-Iraq coalition to buy surface-to-surface missiles. Libya? It sided with Iraq, it is a "terrorist headquarters" and already hit Tripoli once in the pre-Gulf "Vietnam Syndrome" days.

There is no way of knowing what country will next experience the New World Order. Perhaps none will dare cross the path of the world's only superpower. Perhaps Bush's New World Order will be like Pax Romana — decades of peace through superior firepower.

But perhaps the "Vietnam Syndrome" is like a disease, a chronic disease you never really cure. Perhaps this wave of victory euphoria will begin to ebb. Perhaps the U.S. people will realise that the price of the New World Order is war and the endless preparation for war — and the responsibility for death on a grand scale. Perhaps we will find a way to stop the next war.

The overwhelming support for this war is built upon the image that it was a cheap and easy victory. Our immediate task is to expose the full cost of this war — because war is never cheap. The full cost includes the suffering of hundreds of thousands in Iraq, Kuwait and Jordan. It includes all

those in this country who would have benefited from the peace dividend we rightfully expected a year ago. It includes the cost of a permanent U.S. military force in the Gulf and a new generation of weapons for the next war.

Gulf lessons

As we act to expose the truth about this war — and stop the next one — we should also take time to learn from the mistakes we made during the last six months. — We seriously underestimated the ability of the U.S. military to kill tens of thousands with "miraculously light" U.S. casualties. The president and generals made no such miscalculation. Military planners estimated before launching the air war that the attack would kill 100,000 to 120,000 Iraqi soldiers. By the time the ground war was launched they were confident that it would be as lopsided as the air war. Intelligence sources put the final toll at over 150,000. No army can withstand that level of loss in a few weeks.

— We put too much emphasis on the danger of high U.S. casualties — avoiding another Vietnam. Our focus on body bags that never came home inevitably diminished the importance of Iraqi lives. When we did focus on Iraqi lives it was mostly on civilian losses — diminishing the importance of military losses. We are used to thinking differently about civilian and military deaths. After all, soldiers fight and kill other soldiers.

But how do we view military casualties when one army is vastly superior to another? On a playground we would stop a far bigger boy from mercilessly beating a smaller one — even if the smaller one "started" it. Tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers surrendered. They were described as hungry, poorly trained, poorly led, unwieldy conscripts. The difference between those who surrendered and those who tried to escape was that the surrendering troops were close enough to U.S. troops to give up. The others just tried to run from an overwhelming military machine. Those hungry, unwilling soldiers trying to escape were mercilessly mowed down. U.S. pilots described roads clogged with vehicles. One pilot called it a "turkey shoot."

— It is too easy to send a standing army to war. Unlike Vietnam, the only people who had something personally at stake this time were those who had loved ones in the Gulf. And those people tend to be from the working class and poor — those with the least power and influence in this country.

The issue is not whether we support a draft just to make war fair. The issue is whether anyone should have to go to fight if they do not want to. — The movement was too slow to respond to the initial U.S. deployment in August — falling for the line that this was to defend Saudi Arabia. We need to see each U.S. action in the context of a worldwide pattern of intervention. We need to remember the central lesson of Vietnam: They lie to us. And we need to learn how to read the hints broadly dropped in the media. In August U.S. officials were saying on "background" that there would be a war and the goal was to destroy the Iraqi military.

— We were too timid to push Congress to act sooner. The dance with our "allies" in Congress is an old one. We say you have to act, they say we don't have the votes, give us time. By the time they're ready the presi-

dent has created a crisis and manipulated the situation. This time the crisis was the eve of the U.N. deadline. We should do what the right wing does: pressure those closest to you — because they are the ones over whom you have the most power.

— We are too dependent on a mass media that will inevitably march to the White House drummer during a crisis. There are alternative sources of information and the mainstream media do provide some critical information. But the dominant images in the mainstream press will be those fed to it by the White House and the military.

The impact of this dominance is that it shapes our immediate thinking about what the issues are. For example, coverage of the civilian bombing focused mostly on the destruction of the infant formula factory and the Baghdad bomb shelter, and on the back and forth about whether these targets were actually civilian facilities.

This debate misses the real issue: The U.S. targeted a wide array of facilities with only a weak link to the Iraqi war effort. Is the water supply a legitimate military target just because soldiers drink water? Are warehouses of food and medicine legitimate targets, even though they are exempt from the U.N. embargo? Is it okay to bomb local government offices just because they control the police?

Because we are dependent on the mass media for our daily perspective on the war, we lose the perspective needed to frame the issues our way.

Much of our task now is to struggle for the hearts and minds of the U.S. people. We do it by finding ways to stay informed and keep our perspective despite the waves of White House-and-military-generated propaganda. We are a small, discouraged, angry minority right now — and that makes every voice critical. We are also the hope of millions of people throughout the Third World, people without our free speech rights, people who face not discouragement and isolation, but the deadly onslaught of the world's only superpower. Our inaction is a luxury they cannot afford.

King

(Continued from page 1)

"Scowcroft went to the Middle East to consult on the Middle East situation, particularly the post-war situation in Iraq," said a White House official who asked not to be named.

He declined to comment on speculation that Mr. Scowcroft's unannounced trip was possibly connected to negotiations to free Western hostages held in Lebanon.

The White House would not say what country or countries Mr. Scowcroft, accompanied by the National Security Council's top Middle East specialist, Richard Haass, visited or with whom he held talks.

Mr. Scowcroft arrived in the Middle East Tuesday and returned to Washington Thursday night, the official said.

Land Day

(Continued from page 1)

flags to commemorate the police killings in 1976 of six Arabs protesting against Israel's seizure of Arab land.

Arab leaders said they were also concerned about the settlement of Soviet Jewish immigrants in the occupied territories.

The Israeli authorities, afraid of an upsurge of violence during Land Day, which coincided with the first day of the Jewish Passover holiday and the Easter weekend, cancelled police leave. Originally an Israeli Arab protest, Land Day has been adopted by the Palestinians as a symbol of

their nearly 40-month-long revolt against Israeli rule.

Israeli Arabs said they wanted to focus world attention on Israeli plans to make them a minority in the Galilee region by settling Soviet Jewish newcomers there.

"People are in a sombre mood. Everybody is worried about land confiscation and Soviet Jews," said Walid Awad, an employee of Nazareth municipality.

About 200,000 Soviet Jews have arrived in Israel in the past 18 months and up to one million are expected here by the end of 1992.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, a hardliner in the most right-wing government in Israel's history, has said he wants to create a buffer of Soviet newcomers between Palestinians in the West Bank inside the green line.

"Our people are preoccupied with the possibility of confiscation of land for Soviet immigrants," said Ibrahim Abdullah, council leader in the Arab village of Kufir Qassem, east of Tel Aviv. "They have already started taking land in Ain Mahel (village near Nazareth)...they are building huge neighbourhoods on Arab land in the village," he told Reuters.

Arab leaders also complain that their village councils receive less government money than Jewish municipalities. About 40 Arab villages were not recognised as municipalities and received no municipal services like water and electricity, they say.

ICRC call

A senior representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has asked Israel authorities to take urgent

action to reduce tension in the occupied territories, the ICRC said.

It said the ICRC chief of operations, Jean de Courten, reiterated during a visit in Israel that the occupation army's settlement policy in the occupied territories and the expulsion of residents from there are contrary to the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians.

The unusually detailed statement issued at ICRC's headquarters following the March 22-27 visit said Mr. De Courten pointed that the recurrence of such practices "inevitably brought about serious consequences and increased tension."

"De Courten also insisted that measures be taken to improve the situation of detainees under interrogation and to allow family visits to all detainees, wherever they are held on Israeli territory," the statement said.

"The ICRC sees this last point as a humanitarian priority, especially concerning detainees held at Qeriot military detention centre, where no family visits are allowed," it added.

GCC

(Continued from page 1)

economic cooperation.

He said post-war security arrangements in the Gulf required an Arab peace force composed mainly of Egyptian and Syrian troops, a United Nations role and a continued foreign presence.

"The international community has strategic interests in the Gulf area and this has to be reflected

in security arrangements," Mr. Beshara said.

Diplomats said countries like the United States, Britain and France were expected to deploy warships in the Gulf once a peace treaty was signed with Iraq but the western allies had not been asked to deploy ground forces.

Beshara said none of the GCC members had any strong desire for a permanent U.S. military presence in the region.

He said the so-called Damascus charter, adopted by Syria, Egypt and the GCC members in February, envisaged a regional security arrangement operated by the Arabs themselves, with assistance from United Nations observers.

He said the new ties embodied in the charter represent "one of the most fascinating stages in the history of Arab relations."

Allies

(Continued from page 1)

Final action on the U.N. resolution could come this week. While some issues remain unresolved, "we're very hopeful of passage," the official said. "It's proceeding very well."

"I can assure you that not much has been left untouched in this resolution, in terms of anything that would give Iraq the power, the where-with-all to create a trouble," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "They are the defeated country, I'm not sure they have much choice" but to accept the U.N. terms.

The proposed U.N. resolution is designed to clear the way for a permanent ceasefire in the Gulf war. It requires:

— Iraq to destroy all its remaining chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and forswear future development or acquisition of such arms. Nuclear materials that could be used for weapons would be destroyed or removed by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

— Iraq to be liable for damage, including environmental harm, resulting from its invasion of Kuwait. It would have to cooperate with the International Red Cross in repatriating Kuwaitis, forswear "international terrorism" and vow to respect its 1963 boundary with Kuwait.

— Establishment of a U.N. military observer force monitoring a demilitarised zone reaching 10 kilometres into Iraq and five kilometres into Kuwait.

— Iraq to destroy all its remaining chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and forswear future development or acquisition of such arms. Nuclear materials that could be used for weapons would be destroyed or removed by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

— Iraq to be liable for damage, including environmental harm, resulting from its invasion of Kuwait. It would have to cooperate with the International Red Cross in repatriating Kuwaitis, forswear "international terrorism" and vow to respect its 1963 boundary with Kuwait.

— Establishment of a U.N. military observer force monitoring a demilitarised zone reaching 10 kilometres into Iraq and five kilometres into Kuwait.

Kirkuk, with a population of about 270,000, has changed hands several times since Thursday's assault by loyalist troops. Izzat Ibrahim, vice-chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, was again in Kirkuk Friday and toured the city, stressing the need for restoring essential services.

Mr. Ibrahim was first said to have been in the city on Thursday when Iraq announced Kirkuk had been "totally cleared of all agents."

The agency said Mr. Ibrahim advised local officials that "all government departments will begin functioning on Saturday."

He ordered the removal of the aftermath of "looting and destruction by the humiliated traitors and followers of foreigners in the city's streets and neighbourhoods," it added.

The United States said Friday Iraqi government troops appeared to have regained control of Kirkuk and were holding on to Mosul, Iraq's third biggest city.

"Government forces seem to be in control of Kirkuk, but they have been clashing with insurgent elements northwest of that city and northeast of the city of Mosul, which also appears to be in government hands," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters in Washington.

The leader of a major Iraqi Shiite opposition group has conceded that government forces had recaptured virtually all cities and towns in southern Iraq.

Iraqi

(Continued from page 1)

trusion provided all other countries in the region did likewise, including Israel and Iran.

"He said Iraq does not agree to it because it prejudices its rights," MENA reported, but it quoted him as saying the resolution was still under study.

A 20-page draft ceasefire demands the destruction of Iraqi ballistic missiles systems and chemical and biological weapons and prohibits the import of any kind of military equipment until the council decides otherwise.

Life in Iraq after the war

Collective punishment blurs future for many

By Lamis Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

This is the last in a series of articles on life in Iraq after the ceasefire was declared on Feb. 27.

THERE ARE not many young women left in Al Ameriyah residential neighbourhood in Baghdad. There is hardly a house which did not lose a mother, a sister or a daughter on the night of Feb. 13, when allied missiles hit the public shelter there. The U.S. insisted it was a military bunker. But "most of my school girlfriends were killed. I have very few left," said 16-year-old Soha.

Many young men lost their whole families, wives, daughters and sometimes sisters. In one case a man lost his wife and his four daughters.

There is no figure available on civilian casualties of the war. The bombing of Al Ameriyah shelter, where residents claim more than 800 people were burned to death, is believed to be the attack which claimed the biggest number of civilian casualties.

But it is neither the death toll nor the vast destruction that seem to have shattered Iraqis the most, they say. The Iraqis had been through an eight-year war with Iran (1980-1988) where the country lost hundreds of thousands but was able to stand on its feet again.

"The most tragic aspect of this war is that Iraqis see little hope in the future," said an Iraqi novelist in Baghdad recently.

A combination of the effects of the international embargo against Iraq, political isolation and the destruction of the infrastructure of the country have left a feeling among many that the Iraqis were subjected to a "collective punishment" by the world, particularly the West.

"The problem with the U.S. and the West is that they do not deal with people but with individual leaders without considering the repercussions on the people," said a university professor.

As a result there is bitterness in Iraq that the people and the future of the country were the major victims of the war which was launched in the name of enforcing international law.

In Iraq, many feel that the real aim of the war was to punish President Saddam Hussein for challenging the U.S. and Western interests. "But before they are able to destroy Saddam they have destroyed us, the people," said an Iraqi woman in despair, echoing widespread sentiments.

The despair was further aggravated by the civil war which followed the ceasefire on Feb. 27 in the north and south of the country. The break out of violent unrest has shattered hope in a speedy normalisation of life. "This is unbelievable. The country is moving from one tragedy to another. I am afraid we will enter in an endless chain of destruction just like Lebanon," said a professional translator.

For the last eight months Iraqis have been watching helplessly and with increasing horror as their lives were damaged. At first, an international embargo dramatically imposed restrictions on daily life and then reduced their lives to a pre-industrial level. But then came the intensive and daily bombardment which effectively paralysed life almost totally in the country.

From the very outset of the bombardment the allied forces targeted telecommunications centres, power stations, purification plants and the sewage system.

The targeted buildings, at least in the Baghdad area, were hit several times. After the ceasefire the government started to erase the buildings as the consecutive hits made it impossible to fix them.

"The destruction has thrown us 60 years to a century back. It will be worse than starting from point zero," contended an Iraqi architect.

For more than five weeks, the country, especially Baghdad, plunged in total darkness as the main power stations were badly hit. People used kerosene lamps, like the old days, and candles — mostly bad quality candles producing thick black smoke.

Less than a week after the ceasefire, however, the government, reportedly using an old power station and mobile



An Iraqi woman, faced with an acute shortage of water takes water from drainage in the Azhamiyeh area of Baghdad (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

generator, started a gradual limited restoration of electricity to Baghdad. The impact was tremendous on the spirit of exhausted Iraqis. Every time a neighbourhood was lit, a new hope was sparked. The main topic of daily conversation has become to which areas electricity has been extended.

Allied forces claimed that the bombardment aimed at undermining the Iraqi army, but the Iraqis do not understand why their water supply stations and the sewage system were destroyed.

According to the United Nations and other international relief organisations, the bombardment has destroyed Iraq's modern infrastructure and paralysed public services threatening the outbreak of epidemics. The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that Iraq's central water system supplies only five per cent of its pre-war capacity of potable water.

Citizens, who are getting their main supplies from the polluted River Tigris, are repeatedly asked to boil the tap water.

"This is like a slow death," commented one Iraqi housewife.

The hardest hit of the population seems to be the younger people who see no hope in a paralysed, isolated country. The allied forces have reportedly destroyed most of the major factories, and many of the smaller ones. The destruction of vital economic sectors has aggravated the impact of international sanctions, threatening a catastrophic rate of unemployment.

After the ceasefire, men crowded sidewalk cafes and restaurants (which reopened but had very limited menus), traditional souks and pavements. "They have nowhere to go; many have lost their jobs and their future," said Munir, an electrician.

Souk vendors, however, seem to be flourishing. The Al Shourjah downtown marketplace was always busy and crowded. All kinds of goods flooded the market but this is

unlikely to make life easier for Iraqis who cannot afford the outrageous prices.

Iraqis — except for the affluent — have reduced their intake of meat, bread, rice, tea and milk. The prices of these staple foods are beyond the reach of many. For example a kilo of meat is for 14 Iraqi dinars (more than \$42), while tea, which is Iraq's favourite beverage, especially during the month of Ramadan, is sold at 40 Iraqi dinars a kilo (more than \$120).

Moreover, fuel remains in acute shortage despite the resumption of petrol sale at gas stations. An Iraqi citizen is entitled to 20 litres every three weeks. About 80 per cent of Iraq's refinery facilities have been reportedly damaged by the allied bombardment.

Fuel is available in the black market for five to eight dinars a gallon. It is mostly stolen from army vehicles, according to citizens.

The Iraqis have found the fuel shortages particularly unacceptable. "This is incredible. We are an oil-producing country," said one taxi driver.

Baghdad once boasted of its huge taxi network; now, the white and red cabs have become something of a rare commodity. In the past many Iraqis complemented their limited incomes or avoided unemployment by working as taxi drivers.

Although the traffic on Baghdad's street was last week slowly picking up on the deserted highways, Baghdad has been turned into a capital of pedestrians and many are using bicycles.

International relief organisations have warned that without fuel the mission of rebuilding Iraq was impossible and it will be difficult to operate hospitals or to set up water purification plants.

The lack of telecommunications and the shortage of fuel has severed contacts — and consequently reduced socialising — in the city of four million. Relief workers, journalists and medical volunteers coming from Jordan find themselves travelling long distances

distributing letters from Iraqi expatriates who have been worried about their families.

Visitors, mostly from Jordan, carry their own gallons of fuel and supply their Iraqi friends. Vans loaded with food supplies and medicine, mostly by Jordanian and international relief organisations, are almost the only vehicles seen travelling to Baghdad along the badly damaged highway.

When this reporter returned to Baghdad three weeks after the war, there were many destroyed vehicles, mostly civilian, carrying Jordanian licence plates on the highway which was a target for continuous air raids by the allied forces.

In Baghdad transport was rendered more difficult after the destruction of two historic bridges: Al Mousalak and Al Joumhouriyah. The collapse of the bridges did not only further complicate life in Baghdad but also caused deep resentment among residents who are proud of their architectural value.

"I just cannot get myself near the bridges. I break into tears just by observing the view from far. I cannot see the beautiful city destroyed," said an Iraqi poet who is in his seventies.

Although there were no reports by experts of acute air pollution, residents, especially the elderly, have complained of irritation in eyes and lungs. During the heavy days and nights of the bombardment there were days that Baghdad would be shrouded in fog-like grey smoke. Day by day it was clearing up, but the air remained heavy.

"They have destroyed everything. The country's infrastructure, our dreams and even the oxygen," said the poet expressing the deepening siege mentality that has evolved in Iraq.

"But we should remain hopeful. It is not the first time that Baghdad was destroyed and it was always rebuilt to assume its place in the world civilisation," the poet said, reflecting on Iraqi pride that their country is synonymous with history.

Karbala bears the scars of a bloody dissent

By Mariam M. Shabin

The writer, a Jordan Times Staff Reporter, has just returned from a week-long working visit to Iraq. She filed the following report from the city of Karbala.

KARBALA — A subdued atmosphere of resignation pervades in this Shiite holy city which until last week was the scene of what was evidently intense and ferocious fighting between rebels and the Iraqi army.

To speak of continued "resistance" by the rebels is futile for Karbala has been largely destroyed. Very few houses, and stores have been left intact. Even the ancient mosque of Hussein and Abbas have been damaged by the fighting. The city, considered one of the holiest by Muslims of the Shiite sect, saw at least a week of fighting since the Feb. 27 ceasefire between U.S.-led forces and Iraq has come into effect.

The destruction here was perpetrated by the various groups and finished off by the layman," said Dr. Karim Obais Elawi, of the Al Hussein hospital, the largest in Karbala.

Asked how many people were killed, he said, "hundreds, maybe thousands. No one knows exactly." Many residents of Karbala said they heard Persian-speaking people and Arabs with both Saudi and Egyptian accents in the city while the rebellion was in full swing, a good ten days ago.

But at least one resident of Karbala, who fled the city during the three most intense days of fighting, said that no "foreigners" were involved in the rebellion as such. "The rebels were mostly young and poor people who heard a calling from the east, from Tehran; they had two aims, one is to create an Islamic republic in Iraq and the second is to overthrow the present government," said a pharmacist who asked to remain anonymous.

According to the pharmacist, who was evidently sympathetic to the rebels, they never had a chance in succeeding in their rebellion. "We the people of Karbala consider Hassan and Hussein and Abbas as the Arabs consider God, holy beyond anything, so they died as martyrs," he said. "The concept is common here. I saw several young men charging into tanks with only rifles in their hands... they were on suicide missions with no hope of winning; but they heard a calling and to them that was all they needed, they didn't need outside interference," he said.

While many residents of Karbala fled the city to the countryside or Baghdad, thousands who had taken refuge in Karbala to escape the conflict zone in southern Iraq also fled. The pharmacist said that from what he saw "there must be at least 2,000 to 3,000 people that died here."

One refugee from southern Iraq, who eventually escaped to Saddam city, a Baghdad

suburb, said, "we kept on fleeing... Americans, Egyptians there were foreign troops everywhere."

All Iraqis that spoke to the Jordan Times including those in Karbala seem to agree that the rebellion of some Shiite groups in the south was made possible only because of the presence of American and other foreign troops on Iraqi soil.

As one resident of Baghdad who is originally from southern Iraq put it: "In that sense, the conflicts that have occurred since March 6, were in fact instigated directly or indirectly by outside forces."

For the residents of Karbala who fled the city many were shocked to find their city in ruins upon their return ten days later. In shambles and riddled with mortar holes, shops and homes were no longer inhabitable; the stench of death was everywhere.

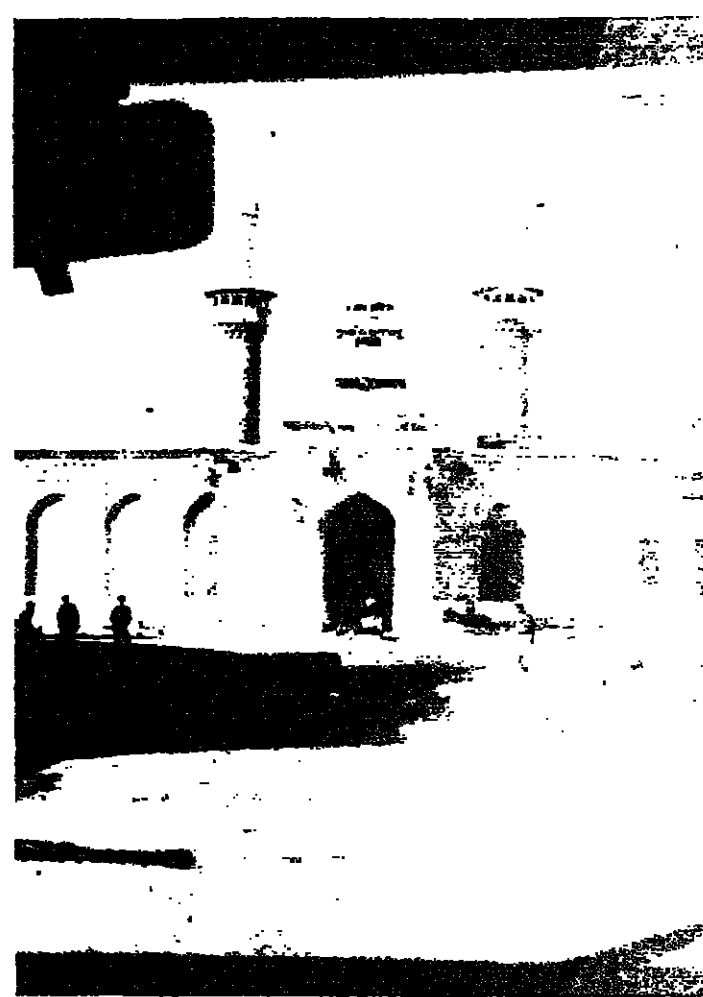
Who did what to whom is difficult to ascertain now. But one thing seems certain for the moment and that is the rebels have been totally and completely crushed by the Iraqi army. As one Karbalan, evidently sympathetic to the rebels, said: "They have no place left to hide."

At the city's main Al Hussein hospital, nothing has been left intact. No beds, no intravenous needles, no medicines, etc. The hospital, as this reporter saw it on March 27, is living evidence to what could only have been a bloodbath. Blood still stained floors where victims lay.

The hospital, which had 232 beds, has been looted of its infrastructure: Surgical equipment, beds, furniture and library. There is no water, the generator is out of work, and a mobile clinic was destroyed. Those ambulances still parked outside the hospital had no tyres and many were riddled with bullets. The "Islamic republic of Iraq" was painted on the ambulances and a picture of President Saddam Hussein hanging in the hospital entrance was slashed with a knife.

In the garden of the hospital the earth is still fresh from the mass grave in which countless bodies of victims lay. Empty shells could be found all over the hospital. The employees looked numb. Women with blank stares in their eyes continued to attempt to clean up the blood stains, although no water seems to be available anywhere.

Of the nearly 400 permanent and portable beds once available in the hospital only a few dozen remain. There are no patients left, and "those who could walk left and the rest died in the cross-fire," said Dr. Elawi. He opened the refrigerator filled with blood



(Above) Karbala's holy shrine of Al Hussein Ibn Ali carries the marks of the rebellion in the south that only ended after Iraqi army intervention, and (below) a hospital room after being hit by a shell (photos by Mariam Shabin)



bags no longer usable, because a lack of electricity has rendered them useless.

No heavy presence of Iraqi troops seemed evident as local residents picked up what was left of their markets and homes

and told each other stories of plunder, destruction and death that have engulfed this city, from which only the brilliant golden domes of the mosques of Al Hussein and Al Abbas have survived.

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Iran central bank says firm economic path laid

DUBAI (R) — Iran has improved its international status by staying neutral in the Gulf crisis but on the domestic front there is no immediate relief for its economic problems.

But central bank officials say the country now has firm, long-term plans.

A report by the bank's international department shows deep changes in thinking from the revolutionary Islamic policies adopted after the 1979 revolution.

Plans over the past two years by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's government to control inflation, save the debased currency, break down the top-heavy bureaucracy and stimulate the demoralised private sector are bearing fruit, officials said.

Iran is gradually returning to international acceptability after resisting domestic fundamentalist pressure to side with Iraq during the Gulf war. It renewed ties with Saudi Arabia last week after a three-year halt.

Winning the internal economic war is at least as important to Rafsanjani as any foreign policy victory.

Most Iranians are concerned

only with making enough money to food, clothe and house themselves and their family.

In their eyes, the reputation of Rafsanjani and his team of technocrats stands or falls on their ability to provide them with the basics of life, and a few luxuries.

The bank's research team said in the report inflation was now in single figures, and the excess money the government printed in hope of spending its way out of trouble was being gradually soaked up by stricter monetary policies.

Targets included, "simplifying bureaucratic formalities, and reducing direct involvement of government in the economy."

The report said the 1989-93 five-year plan encouraged the participation of the private sector, including the sale of state enterprises and the reactivation of the Tehran stock exchange.

"These objectives could not be attained without implementing proper long-term policies," the report said.

Independent economists may argue with the figures but they agree that in many areas things are getting no worse and may improve if government policies

are given a chance to work.

Leaving behind the 1980s has been a painful political process. Iran's attempt to run a successful economy for 35 million people based on purist Islamic principles failed by most accepted standards of economic achievement.

Instead, government attacks on Western-style management, bureaucratic incompetence, a firing eight-year war against Iraq, and low prices for Iranian crude oil, created rampant inflation, debased the currency and quashed the entrepreneurial spirit.

Surviving radical politicians who see themselves as heirs of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini remain deeply suspicious of such Western basics as interest rates, the profit motive and free market theory.

But their influence has declined and some Iranian political analysts think they received a mortal blow from their attempts to get Iran to side with Iraq during the Gulf war.

Independent economists believe Iran's next task is to persuade foreign investors and financiers that the achievements it lays claim to are worth backing.

U.S. index rises 1.1 per cent

WASHINGTON (R) — The government's main forecasting gauge for the economy's future rose during February for the first time since last June, the Commerce Department said Friday, a sign recession's grip may begin to ease.

The index of leading indicators climbed by 1.1 per cent after a revised decline of 0.5 per cent in January that originally was reported as a 0.4 per cent fall.

The department said Wednesday the nation's gross national product, or GNP, shrank at a smaller 1.6 per cent annual rate in the final quarter of 1990 instead of a 2.0 per cent rate as previously thought.

The economy is expected to contract again in the current first quarter but the Bush administration predicts growth will resume by mid-year after a short, mild recession.

The leading indicators index is designed to reveal the direction of the economy three to nine months in advance and the February gain was stronger than Wall Street economists' forecasts for a 0.8 per cent rise.

February's rise was the strongest monthly gain in more than 2½ years, since a 1.6 per cent increase in June 1988.

The department said seven of 11 indicators that make up the index rose in February led by

higher stock prices, improved consumer confidence, more building permits, a bigger money supply, more manufacturers' orders for consumer goods and higher order backlogs and commodity prices.

Stock prices began rising sharply in mid-January, after the war with Iraq began, and continued gaining well into February. Department officials said the stock market advance accounted for more than half the overall February index rise.

Three indicators were negative, including higher jobless benefit claims, a shorter workweek and fewer contracts for plant and equipment.

Japan emerges as big world investor

WASHINGTON (AP) — Japan emerged in 1990 as the rising big spender in acquiring foreign business, putting out \$18.04 billion to buy more than 200 companies, according to a new survey.

But Japanese investors were still running second to the British. Britons spent \$20.024 billion on foreign investment, but their spending was down. Japanese buying rose in each of the last three years.

Britain has a long history of investment abroad. After World War II there was a long period when Japan could do little of it.

The survey of 18 important industrial countries was done for KPMG Peat Marwick, the international accounting firm, and appeared in the 1991 edition of its publication "Dealwatch." Herbert Adler, an American partner in the Amsterdam-based firm, described the survey.

He pointed out that ambitious companies want to establish themselves quickly in fast-growing foreign markets. Acquiring established companies gives them a bigger share of the market for their products, and a prospect of more profit with less competition.

The prospect of reduced barriers to trade among the members of the European Community (EC) after 1992 makes companies in the EC's 12 countries attractive targets for acquisition, Adler said.

Last year two big electronics concerns in Britain, a member of the EC, were among the most important acquired by outside companies: STC by Canadians for \$2.6 billion and ICL by Japanese for \$1.34 billion.

"When mentioning 'ambitious companies', the Japanese are the first to come to mind," Adler said in a statement that went with the

survey.

"They have emerged as the world's newest 'high roller' in the international mergers and acquisitions game...." he noted.

In an interview Friday he added that his firm's figures showed that Japan was first among foreign investors in the United States last year.

"They have showed an overwhelming preference for buying in the U.S., where they bought 121 companies — 59 per cent of their worldwide purchases — for \$13.9 billion," Adler said.

In the United States, the Japanese were followed by Britons who put \$10.4 billion into smaller transactions. France was third with \$7.2 billion, followed by Germany, \$4.3 billion and Switzerland, \$3.4 billion.

Britons had been the top foreign investors in the United States in 1989 with \$16.9 billion worth of

purchases, followed by Japanese with \$12.7 billion, Adler said.

But in 1990 the British turned more to investment at home. They spent only \$1 on foreign acquisitions for every \$8 they spent on new plants and equipment in Britain. In 1988, the ratio was 1:3.

Although Japanese investors send a smaller proportion of their money abroad, they have more to invest: Japan's annual income is more than three times Britain's.

The biggest deal last year was the acquisition by Japanese of MCA, the U.S. entertainment company, by Matsushita for \$6.6 billion.

"Japanese... even became confident enough to make acquisitions in the face of local opposition," Adler said.

The survey showed U.S. companies also active in buying up foreign companies. Their purch-

ases were in fourth place, \$15.846 billion, after French acquisitions of \$16.373 billion.

The second-largest deal reported during the year was the purchase by Philip Morris of Switzerland's Jacobs Suchard chocolate-maker for \$3.8 billion.

Among the most aggressive of international investors were the Swedes, who have a much smaller economy. The \$9.549 billion they spent on foreign acquisitions amounted to nearly \$1 for every \$4 they invested at home.

The rise of Japan's overall investment in this country apparently went counter to the trend in real estate. A survey released last Wednesday by Kenneth Leventhal and Co., an accounting firm that specialises in real estate, said Japanese bought \$13.06 billion worth in 1990, down from \$14.7 billion the year before.

Romania devalues leu

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania's national bank Friday announced a 41.6 per cent devaluation of the leu to 60 per dollar at the official exchange rate, the state news agency Rompres reported.

The devaluation of the official rate was in keeping with the National Salvation Front government's policy of a gradual move towards currency convertibility as part of its programme for building a market economy.

The new rate of 60 leu to the dollar would take effect Monday, Rompres said. The devaluation was announced after banks had closed for the weekend.

The previous official rate was 35 leu to the dollar.

Romania last devalued the leu on Nov. 1 from 21 to 35 per dollar.

Since then the government has introduced an embryonic foreign exchange market through daily inter-bank currency auctions involving six banks as part of the drive towards convertibility.

In the inter-bank market, the leu trades for as much as 200 per

dollar, which is close to the black market rate.

In April the auctions will be broadened to allow ordinary citizens to buy and sell currency through the banks, a move amounting to semi-legalisation of the black market.

But the government intends to keep the parallel official exchange rate as a form of subsidy for industries heavily dependent on imported raw materials, such as the energy sector, in order to avoid too great a price shock for the population.

On Monday the government is also going ahead with a planned liberalisation of the prices of staple foods and essential services, a policy agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for \$1 billion worth of financial assistance this year.

Trade unions, opposition parties and splinter groups in the ruling party have voiced opposition to the programme, which they say was too hastily and clumsily prepared and gives inadequate protection to the poor.

Moroccan tourism flourishes

RABAT (R) — The number of tourists visiting Morocco surged by over 18 per cent last year and earnings rose by 22 per cent despite a slump in world-wide tourism during the Gulf crisis, the tourism ministry has said.

But the number of European tourists was down.

Nearly three million foreigners visited Morocco, half of them from neighbouring Algeria, while the number of Europeans fell by nearly seven per cent to 1.18 million, the ministry said.

During the Gulf crisis several European governments advised their nationals not to visit North Africa.

The ministry said that compared to 1989 income from tourism rose by 22 per cent to 10.5 billion dirhams (\$1.31 billion).

P and O hoists storm flag as profits tumble

LONDON (R) — Peninsular and Oriental (P and O) Steam Navigation Company, one of Britain's oldest firms, has blamed a 30 per cent fall in 1990 pre-tax profits on recession and the Gulf crisis, adding it was still not out of the trough.

P and O chairman Lord Jeffrey Sterling said 1991 might not even equal 1990's results despite some pick-up in business since the end of the Gulf war.

"After the end of the Gulf conflict, there are some signs of economic improvement for the rest of this current year," Sterling said.

"However, this is unlikely to impact on our results soon enough for 1991 to be anything but disappointing and the outcome... could fall short of 1990," he added.

The company, which has business interests ranging from shipping to building and services, said pre-tax profits in 1990 fell to £261.3 million (\$462 million) from £376.7 million (\$666 million) the previous year.

Sterling said the recovery in

consumer confidence since the end of the Gulf war could be too late to help P and O's battered housebuilding, construction and development division, which trades under the name of Bovis.

This division saw 1990 operating profit shrink to £15.8 million (\$27.9 million) from £155.6 million (\$275 million).

P and O also said it expected profits from its cruise activities to fall by \$30 million in 1991 because it had to reschedule two ships from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean.

Sterling rejected speculation in financial markets that the company might join a recent rush for share rights issues to bolster its assets. The group has about £1.3 billion (\$2.30 billion) of debt against £1.74 billion (\$3.08 billion) of capital and reserves.

"We haven't given it one second's thought," he said.

P and O is in the middle of a £1.5 billion (\$2.65 billion) capital expenditure programme to upgrade its ships, London's Earls Court exhibition centre and the English port of Felixstowe.

China defence budget needs aid despite hefty increase — official

BEIJING (R) — China's defence industry must shift more production to civilian goods to help to cover costs despite a 12 per cent rise in the military budget this year, a senior official for technology said Friday.

"We don't see too much help from this (increase)," said Jin Zhude, head of the China Association for the Peaceful Use of Military Industrial Technology, an agency that helps defence plants to shift production to the

civilian sector.

"We can't rely on the central government to bail us out," he noted.

China has budgeted 32.5 billion yuan (\$6.3 billion) for defence spending in 1991 compared with 29 billion (\$5.6 billion) last year.

It is the second consecutive year of big budget increases for the army, which came to the aid of China's beleaguered communist rulers and quelled pro-democracy unrest in 1989.

Western military analysts say much of the actual defence spending is not included in the published budget.

Some of the spending supports factories that employ millions of workers grouped under the ministry of national defence.

Many of these plants have experienced a reduction in demand for their military products because of a cut in the size of the armed forces in recent years. The military is estimated at just over three million strong, down one million from its peak.

Factories that once produced ammunition, tanks or aircraft are now turning out bicycles, refrigerators and trucks among other non-military goods, as well as their more traditional products, to make ends meet.

Defence plants turn out 10,000 different civilian products, accounted for about two-thirds of their output, Jin said.

A missile plant in southwestern Guizhou province produces refrigerators while an aircraft factory in the central city of Xian makes textile machinery. The military accounts for 12 per cent of all car and truck production and 60 per cent of motorcycles, Jin said.

Loans from Beijing, contributions from local governments and tax cuts help to ease the transition.

"We are not like the West. We can't close these factories down and we can't lay people off," Jin said.

The association is in fact a government office set up jointly by the State Planning Commission, the State Science and Technology Commission and the State Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence.

"We are not like other associations," Jin said.

IATA expects world air traffic to grow only 3% this year

AMSTERDAM (R) — Public concerns about air travel as a result of the Gulf crisis would help hold world airline traffic growth down to around three per cent in 1991, less than half the usual rate, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has said.

"The industry has lost at least six months of growth," IATA Director General Gunter Eser told an air travel symposium. "We may end the year having achieved three per cent traffic growth.... (instead of) the more

usual six to seven per cent."

In January, the month the Gulf war broke out, carriers' revenue slumped more than \$1 billion with one eighth of usual passenger traffic avoiding air travel.

"February is probably worse, with some recovery coming only in the current month," Eser said.

The collapse in business in the first two months of this year follows heavy losses in 1990, when fuel prices soared after Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

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Central Bank official rates					
	Buy	Sell			
U.S. dollar	680.0	684.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	483.2	486.1
Pound Sterling	1188.1	1195.2	Dutch guilder	355.6	357.7
Deutschemark	400.2	402.6	Swedish crown	110.0	110.7
Swiss franc	469.9	472.7	Italian lira (for 100)	53.8	54.1
French franc	118.3	119.0	Belgian franc (for 10)	194.0	195.2

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in
TIT FOR TAT
(Arabic)
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CONCORD

Duraid Laham — Madlin Taber
in
Kafroon

Show: 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

KARATE KID II

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 675571

NIJOM

Adel Adham & Najwa Fuad
in
THE REVENGE
(Arabic)
12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

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Gorbachev ready to take up territorial stalemate with Japan

TOKYO (R) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, hoping to end almost five decades of cold war confrontation with Japan, will discuss a long-standing territorial dispute when he arrives in Tokyo in mid-April, his foreign minister said Saturday.

Alexander Bessmertnykh did not promise a breakthrough, but went further than any other Soviet official in saying Moscow was ready to negotiate its border with Japan and conclude a peace treaty to put a formal end to World War II.

"An important issue related to the peace treaty concerns is where to draw the boundary between our two countries," he told a Tokyo news conference.

"I believe that there will be serious and intensive talks on this issue during the Soviet-Japan summit meeting."

While Western powers have improved relations with Moscow in recent years, Japan has remained aloof. Tokyo has refused to sign a peace treaty or to improve economic relations with Moscow until it regains four islands — Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashiri and Etorou — seized by Soviet troops in 1945.

Bessmertnykh said Moscow expected Tokyo to drop its refusal to consider economic cooperation until outstanding political issues have been resolved.

"If you continue to link political and economic factors, then you will only be holding up improvements in both these areas."

In recent days, senior Japanese officials have said they would accept recognition of Tokyo's

sovereignty over the four islands as sufficient grounds to conclude the peace treaty.

Bessmertnykh, visiting Tokyo for the first time as foreign minister, said the issue of where to draw the line between the Soviet and Japanese islands in the northern Pacific should be decided on the basis of international law.

Moscow maintains that the wartime Yalta pact gave it control over all the Kuriles, including the four disputed islands.

Japan says three treaties signed with Tsarist Russia between 1855 and 1905 gave it sovereignty over the tiny, barren islands and excluded them from the Kuriles.

Bessmertnykh appeared apologetic over Moscow's stance.

"For a long time we refused to acknowledge that a problem existed," he said. "We were like an ostrich with our head stuck in the sand."

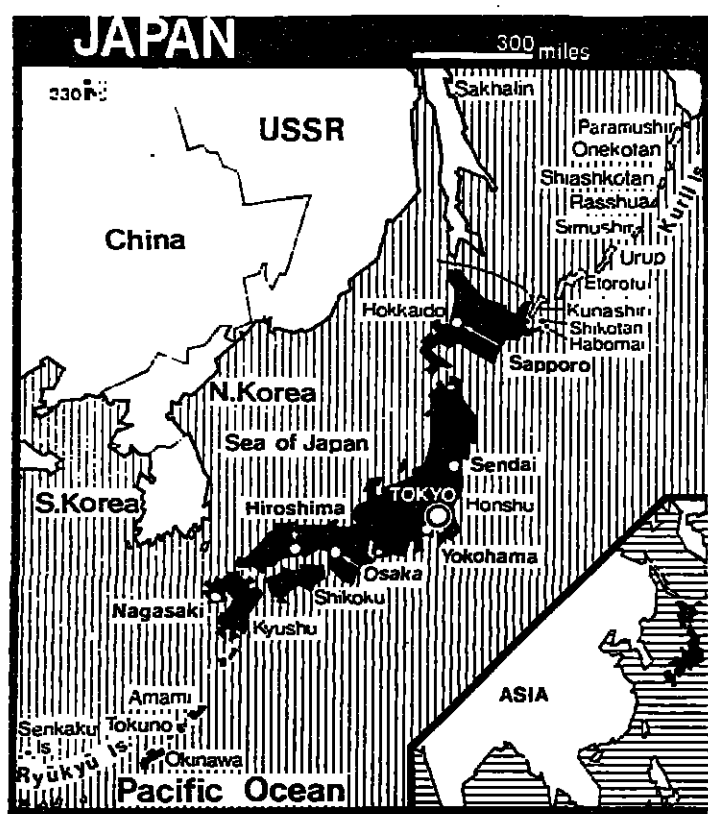
Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama, concluding two days of talks with Bessmertnykh, said he hoped bilateral ties would improve.

"I now believe that our two countries can fundamentally improve relations," he told reporters.

Japanese officials said they detected a softening of the Soviet position.

"Looking back over the past two years, it's clear that the Soviet Union's attitude is much more serious," a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said.

Rumours circulate almost daily that Gorbachev is on the verge of returning the two islands closest to Japan, Habomai and Shikotan,



to secure billions of dollars in Japanese economic assistance.

Bessmertnykh said a 1956 agreement, in which Moscow offered to return those two islands, would have to be considered in future negotiations.

"We must consider the 1956 agreement at this point in Soviet-Japan relations but the situation now has changed," he said.

Japan, under U.S. pressure, spurned the 1956 pact and the Soviet Union retracted it when Tokyo and Washington concluded a security agreement in 1960 at the height of the cold war.

Gorbachev, who will be the first Kremlin leader to visit Japan when he arrives on April 16, is to sign 15 agreements boosting cooperation in the fields of trade, science and technology and culture, Soviet and Japanese officials said.

Mandela, Buthelezi discuss end to violence

DURBAN (AP) — Black leader Nelson Mandela and his main political rival sought Saturday an end to chronic violence between their backers that has left scores dead and could harm anti-apartheid talks.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader to Inkatha Freedom Party, immediately called on President F.W. de Klerk and Mandela to work with him to curb faction fighting.

"As three leaders, the state president, yourself and myself should meet now to establish common purpose and to establish channels of communication ... that will be needed when there is a need to take urgent action," Buthelezi said in a memorandum to Mandela.

But he added: "Quite clearly, neither the ANC nor (Inkatha) can command peace into existence overnight."

Before the talks began, the South African Broadcasting Corp. reported another 19 people dead in unrest in Natal province, including an attack with AK-47 assault rifles and hand grenades that killed six men.

"Violence is increasing and a large number of our people throughout the country are being slaughtered," ANC leader Mandela told an airport news conference before he left Johannesburg for Durban, the largest city in Natal province.

Mandela arrived in Durban early Saturday afternoon and the meeting began shortly afterwards.

His flight was delayed more than two hours by a bomb scare, the South African Press Association (SAPA) reported. It said an English-speaking man telephoned South African Airways Saturday and said a bomb had been placed on the plane.

All passengers were removed from the plane, which was searched, an airline spokesman told SAPA. No explosive was found, SAPA reported.

Saturday's meeting is the leaders' second in two months. The former friends, now political rivals, had not met for 28 years before their Jan. 29 peace summit. Mandela was released last year after 27 years in jail.

The African National Congress (ANC) leader also canceled Saturday a two-week tour of four African nations. He had been scheduled to depart Thursday for Senegal, Tunisia, Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

Mandela said work on an ANC initiative aimed at stopping the violence, to be addressed Thursday at an extraordinary meeting of its top leadership, required him to stay in South Africa. He did not disclose details of the initiative.

Buthelezi told a morning news conference he welcomed the ANC's initiative, but refused to provide details. He said the two leaders might soon meet with de Klerk to discuss the violence and what he called the false perception that only ANC and Inkatha supporters were involved.

Mandela and Buthelezi both said they had spoken regularly since the January summit, but in light of the recent wave of violence Mandela said he could "no longer do so at a distance."

Mandela said he called the urgent meeting because of the recent wave of violence in townships near Johannesburg, which he said required more than long-distance talks.

"This is a man-to-man meeting," he said.

Mandela and Buthelezi also said the continuing violence did not mean the January peace summit had failed.

Mali to hold democratic elections by January

BAMAKO, Mali (Agencies) — Army coup leaders have agreed to share power with civilians, saying they would hold the country's first democratic elections in 22 years by January, official radio said Saturday.

The agreement Friday came three days after rioting prompted the army-led ouster of Gen. Moussa Traore. It allayed fears that one military dictatorship would be replaced by another in this West African nation.

Pro-democracy leaders had said they would call a general strike if the military government, led by Lt.-Col. Amadou Toure, did not agree to share power with them.

Mali's new military rulers have agreed to a power sharing arrangement with civilians and a speedy return to civilian rule, said the communiqué.

The ruling military council for National Reconciliation agreed Friday to create a 25-member transitional committee for national salvation, Mali radio said.

Earlier this week, the army arrested President Moussa Traore after pro-democracy demonstrations in which at least 200 people were killed.

Fifteen members of the committee will come from pro-democracy groups and 10 members from the military, the communiqué said.

The new ruling body would organize a national conference within three months, rewrite the constitution to legalize political opposition, establish a caretaker government, and set a date for free elections to be held before Jan. 1, 1992, he said.

Soldiers would return to their barracks by that date, he said. The announcement was made after an hour-long meeting with leaders of Mali's Committee of Democratic Associations, an umbrella group including political movements, trade unions and professional organizations such as the Mali Bar Association.

Toure was arrested by paratroopers reportedly at Bamako International Airport as he tried to flee the country in the early hours of Tuesday morning. Toure has said that Traore and his family as well as other leaders of his military government were being held under heavy guard. He has not said what will happen to Traore.

Indian forces prevent Kashmiri demonstration

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Indian security forces blocked a major rally called by separatist Kashmiri militants to mark the anniversary Saturday of the death of a colleague in a gunbattle.

Militants told reporters they expected several hundred thousand people to turn up for a rally in Srinagar on the first anniversary of the death of Ashfaq Majid Wani, a senior member of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).

But the Indian government refused to lift a curfew to allow the rally to take place, and witnesses said paramilitary police moved in force into a big open space in

Srinagar's old city where Wani was buried in a "martyrs' graveyard."

Militants had announced a suspension of hostilities for the duration of the rally at Wani's grave, but officials said the government had ignored it.

Witnesses said militants then staged hit-and-run attacks from the old city's narrow alleys on the paramilitary police who moved into the area.

Police said one militant wearing a bullet-proof jacket was killed and seven civilians wounded.

Police have reported the deaths of about 2,400 people in the separatist campaign since it erupted in January, 1990.

Bush campaign manager, Atwater, dies at 40

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lee Atwater, the rough and tumble political tactician who managed President George Bush's 1988 campaign and went on to head the Republican Party, died Friday.

The 40-year-old South Carolinian had battled a brain tumor for more than a year.

Atwater died at George Washington University Hospital at 6:24 a.m. (1124 GMT), according to Mary Matalin, chief of staff of the Republican National Committee.

A wiry, driven man constantly in motion, Atwater was at the peak of an extraordinary career when he was stricken.

Not only had he run a presidential campaign and become chairman of the Republican Party, but he also had attained his dream of performing with some of the greatest rhythm and blues musicians.

President George Bush, Atwater's longtime friend and patron, said Atwater "will always be in our memories."

"I'm very saddened. Barbara and I are heart sick about it. Our whole family is," Bush said during a picture-taking ceremony at the White House.

"Lee was very close to my sons and daughters as well as to Barbara and me. He suffered a lot."

Atwater, often controversial, made his mark in politics.

"A reputation as a fierce and ugly campaigner has dogged me," Atwater once conceded. "While I

didn't invent 'negative politics,' I am one of its most ardent practitioners."

Early in the 1988 presidential campaign against Michael Dukakis, Atwater bluntly told a Republican audience:

"If I can make Willie Horton a household name, we'll win the election."

He succeeded on both counts. Horton was a convicted murderer who raped a woman while on a weekend furlough from a prison in Massachusetts, where Dukakis was governor. The Bush campaign used the incident to portray Dukakis as a liberal who was soft on crime.

During his long fight against the tumor, Atwater publicly apologized to the targets of his political tactics.

In a first-person article published in January in Life magazine, Atwater wrote, "In 1988, fighting Dukakis, I said that I 'would strip the bark off the little bastard' and 'make Willie Horton his running mate.' I am sorry for both statements. The first for its named cruelty, the second because it makes me sound racist, which I am not."

"We obviously were on opposite sides of a tough and negative campaign, but at least he had the courage to apologize. That says a lot for the man," Dukakis said Friday. "My heart goes out to his family. It is always a tragedy when someone this young with a family is taken."

Zerdlack's committee agreed unanimously on recommendations for public broadcasting in eastern Germany, despite those communications problems, but now he's angry with politicians.

"The choices are not hard, but the politicians are delaying," he said. "Delay in this and other fields permits deteriorations. ... We need to keep the best people, not to have them go off to Cologne or somewhere else in the west."

There are bright spots. Last week, it finally became possible to telephone eastern Berlin easily from the western part of the city. A simple 9 has replaced the complicated international system of prefixes for east Germany and east Berlin.

An important hindrance to investment in the east was removed in mid-March. The authorities decided they could sell property to entrepreneurs even if a previous owner claimed it was confiscated in the past.

Westerners start negotiations with an overstated position and expect to find a compromise accompanied by light banter, he said, but easterners view that as arrogant, impolite or frivolous.

Easterners were "deformed by the pervasive Stasi (secret police) syndrome," he said, either parroting the accepted line or using vague language if they didn't know the line.

The accountant gave a task to a man with an advanced degree in economics and "he said he didn't

Albanians vote in free elections today

TIRANA, Albania (AP) — The opposition, buoyed by exuberant crowds at its final rally in the capital, pressed the ruling Communists as the campaign for historical parliamentary elections came to an end.

"The darkness is beginning to lift," Sali Berisha, of the main opposition Democratic Party, told tens of thousands of wildly enthusiastic supporters Friday on Tirana's Democracy Square.

The crowd punctuated speeches by Democratic Party leaders with chants of "our votes are for you" "freedom, democracy" and "we want Albania like Europe."

In contrast, the ruling Communist Party of Labour packed 3,500 invited guests into Tirana's Palace of Congresses for a speech by the party leader, President Ramiz Alia, to the voters of his electoral district.

At stake in Sunday's election are 250 seats in the one-chamber People's Assembly parliament, which must deal with the country's economic disaster and codify reforms that the Communists have begun implementing under pressure from the democracy movement.

Earlier Friday, Alia told foreign journalists he would like to see an all-party coalition regardless of the outcome of the vote, the first multiparty election in Albania in more than 60 years.

But the Democratic Party leaders appeared to be in no mood for a coalition.

"If we win the election, we will choose the president," Berisha said.

Poverty and primitive communications make the outcome of Sunday's election extremely hard to predict. The Democratic Party is thought to have an upper hand among young people and city dwellers.

Communists are thought to have stronger support in the countryside, where about two-thirds of Albania's 3.2 million people live.

Alia's rally marked an effort to try to ensure he wins his parliamentary seat in Tirana. His district, no. 218, was where the Party of Labour's Tirana branch was founded in 1941.

But the Democratic Party may have stronger support than the Communists in the capital.

Alia called on Albanians to show "understanding, tolerance... and discipline" before the vote.

Unlike the spontaneous crowds at the Democratic Party rally, Alia's chanting supporters interrupted his speech at measured intervals of a few minutes.

"Yes, we will follow the Party of Labour... as you think, Ramiz Alia," they shouted.

Alia declined at the news conference to be specific about his own fate if his party loses.

U.N. resumes food aid to Angola

LUANDA (AP) — A United Nations Programme to feed an estimated 2 million Angolans resumed Friday after a three-month halt.

Forty-five trucks flying the U.N. flag left the central Angolan port of Lobito early Friday to deliver maize, beans and vegetable oil in the interior provinces of Huambo and Bie, officials said.

Another convoy headed out from the capital Luanda to the port of Sumbe, 270 kilometres south.

The U.N. launched the relief effort last Nov. 2 to deliver \$70 million worth of food, clothes and medicines throughout Angola over a six-month period.

The southern African nation suffered a severe drought last year. Its agriculture has been ravaged by 16 years of civil war

between the government and U.S.-backed UNITA rebels.

But Angolan authorities ordered deliveries stopped Dec. 21, saying the rebels were disrupting transport to areas under government control.

UNITA said it never attacked aid convoys.

Rebel leader Jonas Savimbi said earlier this month UNITA would scale back military action in anticipation of a ceasefire which both sides say they want to sign next month.

But the government said its forces suffered from heavy rebel attacks this week.

Government television reported Friday the rebels occupied and sacked the port of Nzeto, 160 kilometres north of Luanda.

The report said 10 people died and 200 civilians were kidnapped by the rebels.

Major's dismissal of academic qualifications causes furore

LONDON (R) — A remark by British Prime Minister John Major that common sense was more important than academic qualifications has sparked a row which could wound him right up to the next general election.

Major, who turns 48 Saturday, confessed in a television interview that he was "pretty idle" at school — he left at the age of 16 and was unemployed before getting a job in a bank.

He said he believed intelligence and common sense were more important than a string of academic qualifications and ... they are wholly useless, most of them," he said in the interview to be screened Monday.

Opposition members of parliament immediately rounded on Major, saying his view made a mockery of his own declaration to his Conservative party a month ago that education would top his

political agenda for the 1990s.

"No wonder Britain is slipping down the economic and educational leagues if this is the attitude of the prime minister," said Labour Party education spokesman Jack Straw.

"To say that qualifications do not matter makes a mockery of the government's educational policy."

Matthew Taylor, education spokesman for the Centrist Liberal Democrats, said: "We now know why the Conservative Party has so under-invested in education. They do not think it matters."

Major's father was once a circus trapeze artist and Taylor added: "Presumably the prime minister will be recommending next that children run away to the circus if they want to get on."

Politicians said Major's remarks gave ammunition to the opposition to attack the government during campaigning for the next general election, which must be held by mid-1992 but which many believe could be called this



John Major

year.

Major also said in the Granada Television interview that he hated the intrusions into his privacy that being prime minister entailed and he vowed never to resort to an "image-maker" to change public perceptions of him as dull.

6 months after reunification, change looks more difficult in Germany

BERLIN (AP) — Even blindfolded, a traveler would know it was east Germany. The acrid odor of brown coal still assaults the nostrils in what was, until six months ago, the richest Communist economic zone in the world.

Take the blindfold off. The countryside is marred by strip mines, and seemingly endless blocky buildings known as "apartment silos" make the cities ugly.

Banners fluttering over used-car-lots, a new phenomenon, provide the only colour in many small towns. The last coat of paint, of distant memory, succumbed to the coal smoke long ago.

What does one hear, six months after the Germans were united?

Eastern Germans complain about lost jobs and the uncertainty of social services. They bemoan a lack of eagerness in the capitalist world to rebuild and reorganise a

region where communism flunked the economic test and Stalinism alienated the people.

"As long as economic and social conditions are not the same as in the west, people in the east will feel like second-class citizens," said Mario Kobelt, a 20-year-old from a small town in Thuringia.

Young people like Kobelt should have little trouble making the transition to capitalism, but many others may be too old to break the Communist habit. Complaints about economic hardship are growing in eastern Germany and politicians fear serious unrest would frighten investors away.

Germany is in a time of immense change that now looks more difficult than in the heady days of November 1989 — when the Berlin Wall came down — and since reunification last Oct. 3.

Measured by some of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's own goals,

unification can be judged a failure.

It was supposed to be accomplished without higher taxes, but many tax rates are being raised to produce \$15 billion a year.

Political and economic union was supposed to stop the flight of east Germans to the west. The government says people continue moving west at the rate of 15,000 people a month, and 300,000 commute from what once were border towns to jobs in the west.

In the world's eyes, reunification is a success. It has produced a country of 78 million Germans that still has the biggest economy in Europe, even with the drag of the 16 million easterners, and was the world's leading exporter again in 1990.

Germany remains dedicated to peace, so much so that it stayed off the military bandwagon when other European countries sent soldiers to the Gulf war. It is moving slowly both to shrink its military forces and modify the

constitution to allow the use of troops on foreign missions.

The federal government will be preoccupied for years with the integration of eastern Germany, for which it has budgeted \$59 billion in 1991, roughly what the United States spent on the Gulf war.

Even with such immense investment, Bonn says three to five years will be needed to raise the east to western living standards.

Awareness of the cost has helped reduce the mark's value against the dollar by more than 15 per cent.

Fritz Doleschal, a Munich accountant, has worked part-time in Dresden since October to help revive formerly Communist-run industries, and finds endless frustrations.

He said easterners don't have the western habits of hard work and independent thinking.

The accountant gave a task to a man with an advanced degree in economics and "he said he didn't

COLUMN

Stallone crashes into photographer's car

BEVERLY HILLS, California (AP) — Actor Sylvester Stallone and a bodyguard allegedly crashed their cars into a photographer's vehicle during a wild pursuit that began outside a Sunset strip bar, police said. Stallone said the photographer was the bad guy in a chase that he said "was like an excerpt out of the French Connection," the 1971 movie thriller highlighted by Gene Hackman's car chase through New York City. But the photographer, who's identity was not released by authorities, accused Stallone and his bodyguard, Gary Compton, of purposely crashing their cars into his after a confrontation outside the bar. The police report, filed by the photographer and his companion, alleges assault with a deadly weapon, meaning the cars driven by Stallone and Compton. Police said the incident would be investigated before the district attorney's office decides if it should prosecute the case. Both the police report and Stallone said the incident started outside a bar where the photographer was taking pictures, but the similarities end there. Stallone, 44, the star of the Rambo and Rocky films, said the photographer pursued him when he drove away from the bar with an unidentified woman around 1:30 a.m. The photographer drove toward his Mercedes-Benz 500 SL, made an "obscene gesture" and within the next two minutes, "he hit the back, the front and then along the side" of the car, causing minor damage, Stallone said. The police report says it was the bodyguard who approached the photographer and a companion, also identified as a photographer, around 2 a.m. as they sat in a car across from the bar, said Beverly Hills Police spokesman Lt. Frank Salcido.

India to burn furs

NEW DELHI (R) — The Indian government has said it would publicly burn confiscated furs worth \$360,000 to boost the fight to preserve the country's protected wildlife from smugglers feeding the fashion trade. Five articles made from the fur of the rare Himalayan snow leopard and 46 leopard skins were among items confiscated by the government, it said in a statement. The statement did not specify what would go on the bonfire due to be lit in Delhi on April 18 under the eye of India's "green queen," Environment Minister Maneka Gandhi.

Restaurant exposed for selling human flesh dumplings

PEKING (R) — A restaurant in China has been exposed for serving dumplings stuffed with human flesh — which proved to be a hit with unwitting customers. Wang Guang offered them in his White Temple Restaurant from 1987, according to the March 23 edition of Hainan Special Zone Daily. His brother Hui, a crematorium worker, supplied him with flesh hacked from the buttocks and thighs of corpses, it said. "He ground them up, then mixed the flesh with lots of spices for fear that customers would taste the difference," the newspaper said. "He billed them as Sichuan-style dumplings." The Western province Sichuan is famous for its spicy food. The location of Wang's establishment was not given. "The dumplings were very popular because they were cheap and delicious," the report said. "The restaurant often sold out."

Japan faces huge waste problem

TOKYO (AP) — Japan has created an overwhelming quantity of waste in its race toward consumer affluence, the government said in a report. The amount of household waste in this once-frugal nation will increase by 50 per cent between 1988 and 2000, the Health and Welfare Ministry predicted in its report, titled "The Cost Of Affluence — Thoughts On The Waste Problem." Japan produces 37.7 million metric tonnes of waste a year. It is the world's second-largest producer of garbage after the United States, which generates 178 million tonnes 160 million metric tonnes a year, the report said.